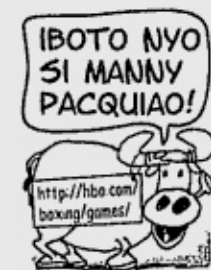


FPJ willing to yield to Lacson to unite opposition

Story below, COL. 1

Pacquiao needs votes for Fighter of the Year



MANNY Pacquiao needs your vote. Nope, he's not running for office. Instead, the boxer who seized the imagination of sports fans all over the world with his stirring win over world featherweight

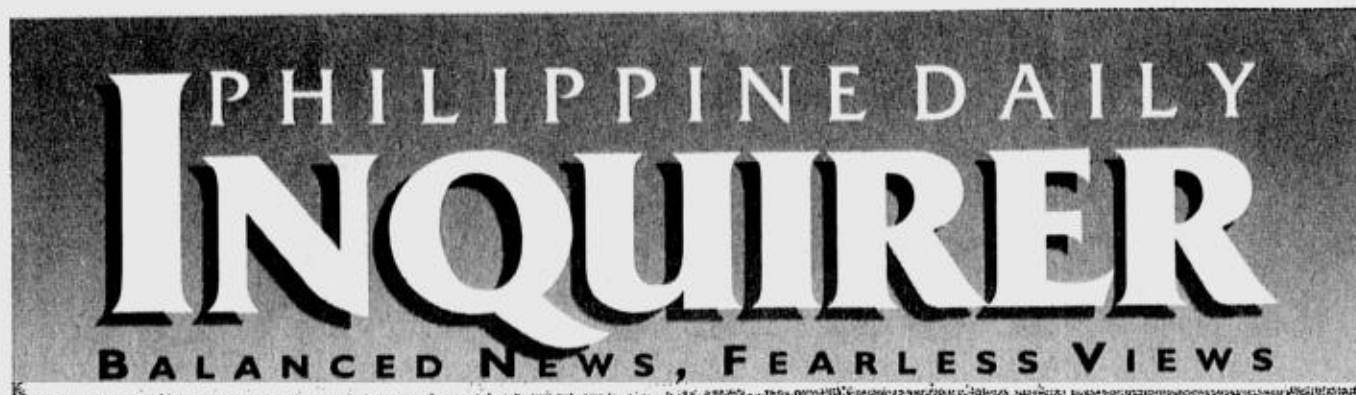
PACQUIAO/A10

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Wednesday, December 10, 2003 ★★ 66 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 2

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- BIR tops November collection target BUSINESS/B1
- Cotabato auto dealer kidnapped ACROSS/A17
- Palace rejects appeal for stay of executions NEWS/A5

Palace woos Roco anew

Romulo met with De Villa on Monday

By Dona Pazzibugan and Michael Lim Ubac

FOR THE second time, Malacañang asked former Sen. Raul Roco to drop his presidential bid in order to give way to President Macapagal-Arroyo's own.

As before, Roco's camp flatly rejected the plea.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo himself conveyed the request to Renato de Villa, Ms Macapagal's first executive secretary, at a meeting Monday night, a source said yesterday.

De Villa resigned as presidential adviser for strategic concerns a few months ago to support Roco, who is running under the Alliance of Hope, which is made up of his own Aksyon Demokratiko, De Villa's Reporma and former Cebu Gov. Lito Osmena's Promdi party.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, the new Liberal Party president, reportedly brokered the meeting at his residence in North Greenhills, San Juan.

The source said Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz were also at the meeting, while De Villa was with some of his party mates. Also reportedly around was Batanes Rep. Butch Abad, the LP chair.

The Palace officials believe that unless Ms Macapagal and Roco team up they would both lose in the May presidential election because they would be dividing the

PALACE/A9



SYMMETRY

Sheila Mae Perez and Cesiel Domenios perform a dive in almost perfect symmetry during the three-meter synchronized springboard diving competition of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games Tuesday in Hanoi. Despite the superb form, the Filipinas settled for the bronze. (Story on Page A25.)

Ganzons sue stepma, doc for murder

By Raj Padilla and Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A month after their father's death, the children of former Sen. Rodolfo Ganzon sued their stepmother and his doctor for murder.

Ganzon's children filed the murder complaint on Monday before the city prosecutor's office against their stepmother Rona Anape-Ganzon and physician Ricardo Portigo

GANZONS/A22



SEEING DOUBLE. Jaime Asok (foreground) and Ryan Rexel Fabriga jackknife toward the gold medal in the 10-meter synchronized platform final in the diving competition of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Hanoi, Tuesday. (Story on Page A25.)

FPJ/A8

Military docs: Robot not out of danger

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER a four-hour operation that started at 10 p.m. on Monday, Commander Robot was placed in intensive care at the V. Luna Medical Center. The military hospital in Quezon City was also put under heavy guard.

"He's not totally out of danger right after surgery. There are so many post-operative complications," Col. Rafael Regino, mili-

tary surgeon-general, said in a press briefing. He mentioned post-operative bleeding, pneumonia and "disseminated intravascular coagulopathy."

The whole procedure, if done by a private hospital, would have cost P500,000, Regino also said.

But the doctor noted that there was a 60-70 percent chance that Robot's left leg would be amputated, because of

MILITARY/A22

FPJ says he's willing to give way to Lacson

By Christine O. Avendaño

FERNANDO Poe Jr. yesterday expressed willingness to yield to his fellow presidential contender Sen. Panfilo Lacson, if only to unite the opposition now split on who between them to support in the 2004 election.

"Pwede rin. I mean, pinag uusapan din namin yan (That's

possible. We're also talking about that)," Poe told GMA-7 in an ambush interview when asked whether he would give way to Lacson given the continued bickering in the opposition.

"Siyempre idadaan natin sa demokrasya kung ano ang karapat-dapat (Of course, we will arrive at what is appropriate through a

FPJ/A8

5th bleak Christmas for Mamburao 6



CAUGHT between two bitter political rivals in Mindoro, or so (from left) Manolito Matricio, Joshua Ungsod and Gelito Bautista continue to claim their innocence, are detained at the Quezon City Jail for the murders of Michael and Paul Quintos, sons of former Rep. Ricardo Quintos.

By Norman Bordadora

IT has been five years since Manolito Matricio woke up to sunshine bathing fruit trees on a piece of land that he had hoped to own under the government's land reform program in Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental.

Nowadays, Matricio, 50, and five of his co-accused in the murders of the two sons of Mamburao landowner Ricardo Quintos wake up to the cramped confines of the Quezon City Jail, tending to handicraft projects instead of mangoes and guapples.

"Yes, we've been caught between two giant stones hitting one another. The Quintos and the Villarosa families have been bitter political rivals and somehow we got sucked into their quarrel," Matricio said.

Matricio and fellow inmates Ruben Balaguer, Gelito Bautista, Eduardo Hermoso, Mario Tobias, Joshua Ungsod and Orlando Estanes would spend another Christmas in jail for a crime that the New People's Army has claimed credit for.

"Ricardo Quintos maintains that we are in

5TH BLEAK/A11

6 martyrs, 4 heroes for Wall of Remembrance

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

A JOURNALIST, a Kalinga fighter, three church leaders and five young activists comprise this year's batch of heroes and martyrs to be honored at the Human Rights Day celebration this afternoon at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City.

Their names are now engraved on the granite Wall of Remembrance, added to the list of those who fought tyranny during the dark years of martial rule and lived and died for justice, freedom and democracy.

In this year's batch of heroes are journalist and professor Armando Malay (1914-2003), and church leaders Rev. Cirilo Rigos (1932-1996), Bishop Antonio Fortich (1914-2003) and Sister Christine Tan, RGS (1930-2003).

The six martyrs were among "the best and the brightest"—mostly young people who were killed during the Marcos reign of terror from 1972 to 1986. They are Floro Balce (1955-1978), Alexander Belone III (1952-1980), Romeo Crismo (1955-1980), Manolo Hollero (1950-1977), Romulo Jallores (1948-1971) and Pedro Dungoc Sr. (1943-1985).

Excluding this year's batch, a total of 107 martyrs and 19 heroes have been honored since 1992.

Fortich was well known for "his pioneering human rights and development work in Negros island... for opening the doors of the local church... for inspiring the priests in his diocese to become involved with the problems of the poor," and for his support for the impoverished sugarcane workers.

Malay exhibited fearlessness as a writer and editor. He defended student freedoms and organized former political prisoners and their relatives. Always at the forefront of street protests against the dictatorship, he braved water cannons and tear gas, serving as example and inspiration to younger activists.

6 MARTYRS/A10



MALAY, journalist



TAN, nun



FORTICH, bishop



RIGOS, bishop

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northeastern Luzon will have cloudy skies with light rains. Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/10/03

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Generals for FPJ? Not quite

Lina not running due to low rating

By Nelson Forte Flores

INTERIOR Secretary Jose Lina Jr. has given up on plans to run for an elective post next May because of his consistently low ratings in voter preference surveys, a reliable source in Lina's staff disclosed yesterday.

The source said Lina had concluded that his chances of winning were slim and has decided to just stick with his job and help President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"He [Lina] already informed the President of his decision not to seek an elective post," the source said.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to contact Lina for comment.

But Lina had stressed in earlier interviews that he has no plans to run or even time to think about it because of his workload at the Department of Interior and Local Governments.

For all his denials, however,

a number of ranking DILG officials said there were indications that Lina was interested in running.

For instance, one DILG official said that while meeting with some Laguna residents, Lina asked probing questions about his chances of winning the gubernatorial race in the province.

The official added that Lina was more comfortable with an elective than an appointive post like that of interior secretary where he is always under pressure and on the look-out for the President who is a demanding taskmaster.

The official further revealed that Lina recently was hospitalized for a few days because of work pressure.

"There is a sea of difference between being an appointive and elective official. Your star will not shine no matter how good you are in being just an alter ego," the source said.

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

NOT ONLY political parties are divided on whom to support in the May 2004 presidential elections, but retired military and police officers too.

On Monday night, some members of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers Inc. (Agfo) met and endorsed the presidential bid of "movie king" Fernando Poe Jr.

Former Manila mayor and police general Alfredo Lim and a handful of retired military and police officials signed a manifesto in support of Poe's candidacy against a backdrop of a streamer that declared "Agfo for Poe."

But Agfo officials scoffed at the use of the organization's name for political means and denied that the group was supporting Poe or any other presidential aspirant.

Agfo president retired Brig.

Gen. Gidaya said Agfo still has not made any decision to support a candidate in the 2004 polls.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former military officer, yesterday warned military generals still in active service who declared their support for Poe that they could be violating the Constitution.

Biazon pointed out that only retired generals and flag officers were allowed to join partisan politics, "but members who are still in active armed service are in violation of the Constitution to do the same."

Of the 720 Agfo members, 47 military generals and 36 police directors were still in active ser-

vice, Biazon noted.

Retired police Chief Supt. Roberto Calinisan said some members of Agfo and the Military-Police Retirees Association organized the affair "on their own," and without pressure from Poe's camp. Poe did not show up at the meeting.

"We believe that only FPJ can unite the country which is driven by too much factionalism and division," Calinisan said in a phone interview.

In Camp Aguinaldo, retired Brig. Gen. Paterno Lomongo, Agfo corporate secretary, said the endorsement of Poe's candidacy by some Agfo members was not sanctioned by the organization.

"We are denying that Agfo is supporting any particular candidate. The association is apolitical although the members, of course as citizens of the country, they can engage in their own way and

perhaps run for any public office," he said.

Lomongo also clarified that Agfo, as an organization, would not support the candidacy of Poe or any other presidential aspirant.

Lomongo said he would summon those present at the meeting to find out who among them used Agfo's name to endorse Poe's candidacy.

Those present at the gathering at the KGB restaurant were retired generals Edgardo Maristela, Jaime Echeverria, Angel Sadang, Enrique Cuadra, Braulio Balbas, Rolando Roque, Antonio Palafox, Pedro Balbanero, Cesar Fortuno, Antonio Villanueva, Antonio Mendoza, Salvador Flores, Lysias Cabusao, Manuel Suarez, Steve Cudal, Cristobal Gutierrez, Panday Panuntungan, Aurelio Medina, Felix Mendoza and Pete Navarro, among others, according to Calinisan.

'Bejo' joins Lakas bandwagon

TACLOBAN CITY—Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez, the younger brother of Imelda Marcos, has joined the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

Romualdez, who took his oath before President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang on Monday, said his decision to join the Lakas-CMD had the blessings of his older sister.

"She [Imelda] told me that I can join any party I want as long as it will help for the development of Eastern Visayas, including Tacloban City. That was also my concession in joining the party," he said.

Members of the Marcos family are said to be backing the presidential bid of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., the opposition bet.

Romualdez, 69, is Tacloban chair of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, the party founded by his brother-in-law, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

He said Ms Macapagal was happy that he joined the ruling party.

A close aide of the city mayor, who declined to be identified, told the INQUIRER that it was the President herself who invited Ro-

mualdez to join the Lakas-CMD.

Ms Macapagal was one of the principal sponsors at the wedding of the mayor's son, former Leyte congressman Alfred Romualdez and movie star Cristina Gonzales in 1998. Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau, and Cynthia D. Balana

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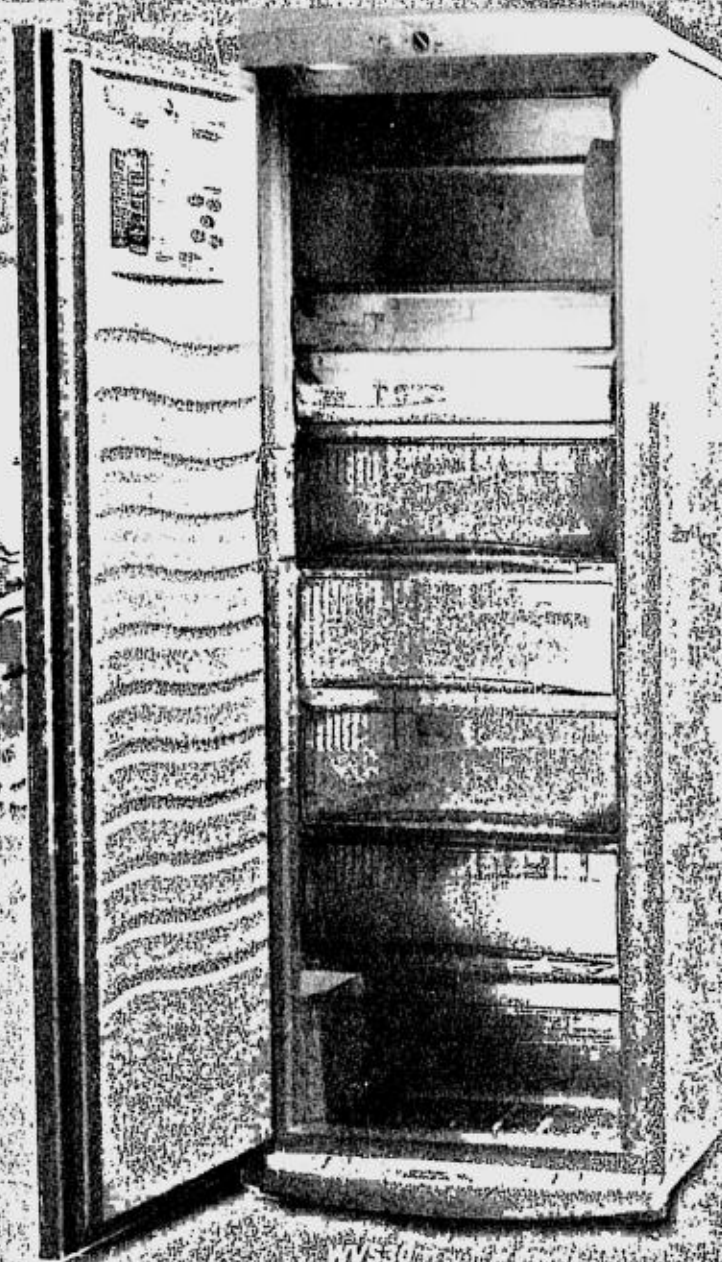
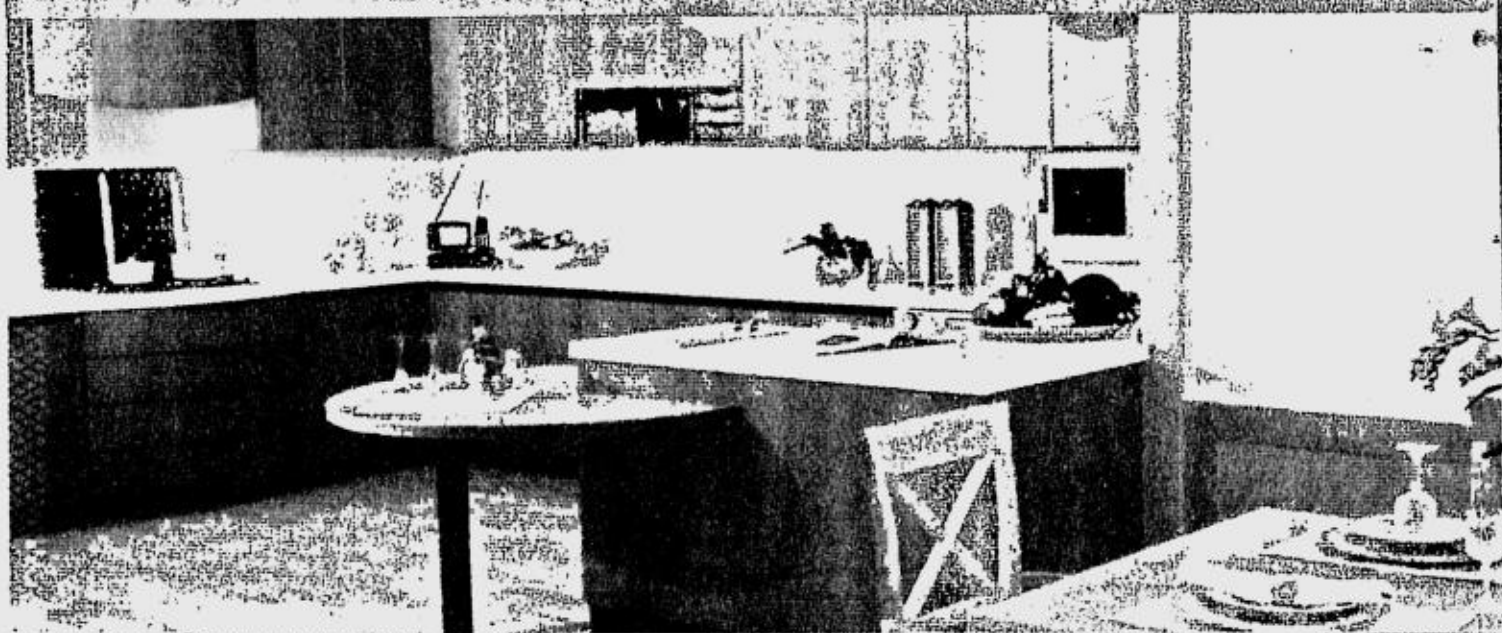
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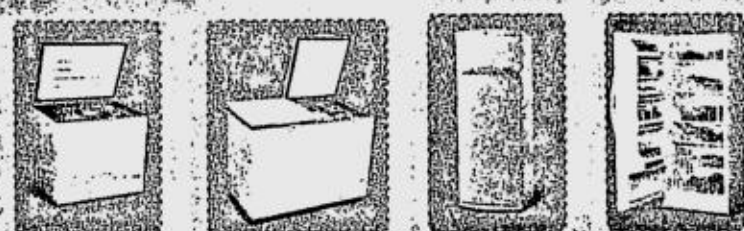
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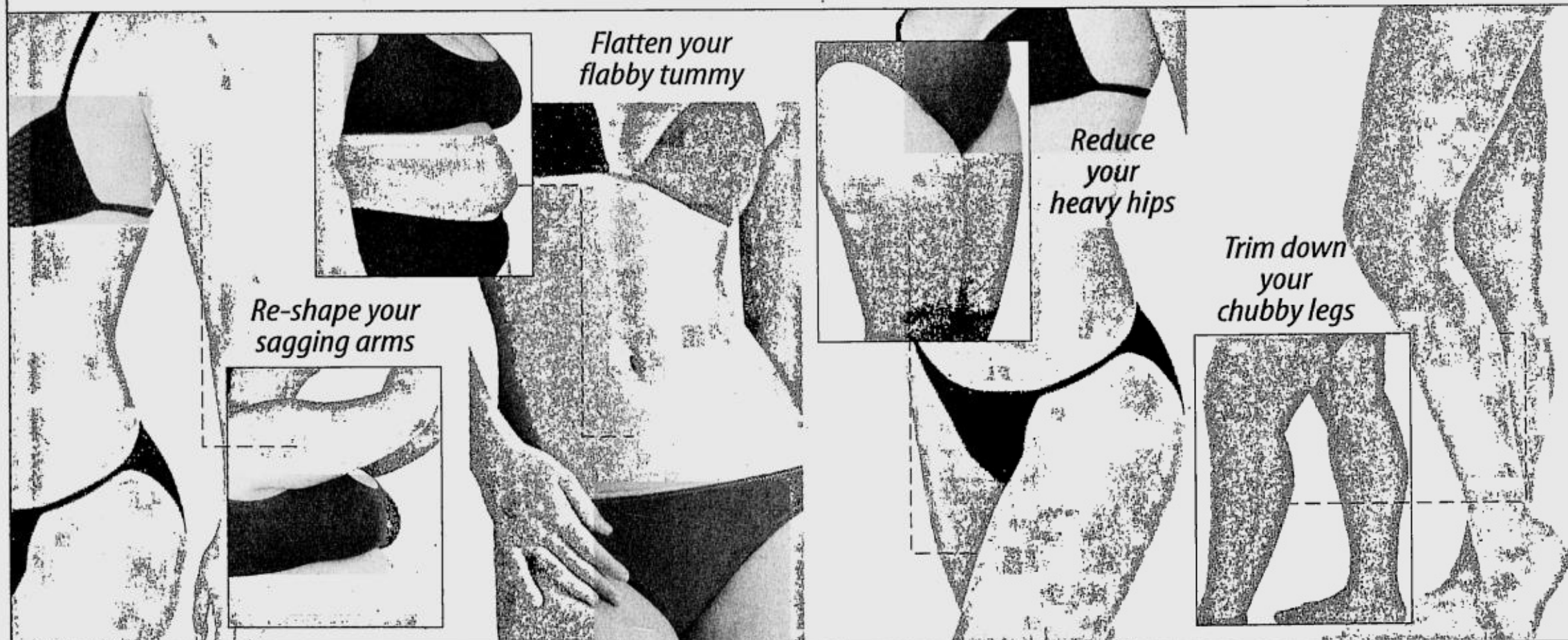


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Ouster of ERC chairman sought

THE CHAIRMAN of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) should resign for his alleged insensitivity to the plight of millions of electricity consumers under the Meralco franchise area in Metro Manila and Luzon.

Former Sen. Juan Ponce, founding chair of Philippine Consumer Watch, reiterated this call, saying that under ERC chair Manuel Sanchez, "the abusive and unjustified increases in Meralco's rates through various schemes have escalated."

"Sanchez is clearly very sympathetic to Meralco and the Lopezes and is insensitive to the consumers. Sanchez is known to have as his key advisers at ERC former Energy Regulatory Board (ERB) chair Rex Tiantongco and another former commissioner who have reportedly been omnipresent in Sanchez's key meetings at the ERC," said Enrile, a long-time critic of Meralco.

"These two advisers are known Meralco-Lopez advocates who were responsible for approving many of Meralco's unjust and abusive rate schemes under the old ERB. Tiantongco was also a principal lobbyist for Meralco during the congressional deliberations of the Energy Power Act," Enrile added.

Enrile, in a press statement, noted that the ERC under Sanchez had granted Meralco very favorable rates in a very short period of time. He cited the following:

1. Under the guise of unbundling power costs, only in May this year, Meralco got a 15.5 percent return-on-rate (ROR) except that now it was called "weighted average cost of capital."

2. Allowed a 16 percent systems loss allowance instead of the 9.5 percent allowed under the law.

3. Approved a generation charge that built in the "sweetheart" price of P5.00 per kwh, rate from the Lopez-owned First Gas Power.

4. Approved another P0.12 per kwh increase citing Meralco's need for financing 42 capital projects and expansion programs. This P0.12 rate increase is on top of allowing the 15.5 percent ROR.

Enrile explained that the recent P0.12 rate increase is unjust and abusive because these were capital expenditures that Meralco shareholders, not consumers, should bear.

Meralco's shareholders should be the ones to pay for the capital expenditures, he said.

He said it was ironic that the ERC would allow Meralco's shareholders to enjoy gargantuan profits and let consumers pay for capital projects and expansion programs.

Enrile said "Sanchez, out of delicadeza, must not spend one more day as ERC chair, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should sack him as soon as possible."

Integrated rehab of NSC pushed

VICE President Teofisto Guingona is asking President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to push for a full integration rather than a piecemeal rehabilitation of the mothballed factory of National Steel Corp.

In a memorandum to the President, Guingona, head of the A.O. 45 Steel Integrated Task Force, said that a proposal by the SDG (Dalian Shide Group) Ltd. of China to develop the Iligan steel plant in conjunction with its plan to build a new and bigger steel mill in Mindanao was by far the best option on the table to achieve the country's dream of having an integrated steel industry.

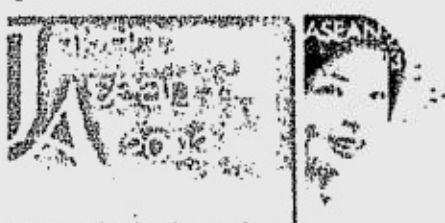
Based on the proposal of SDG, the world's biggest maker of polyvinyl chloride, it can rehabilitate NSC's three mills by 2004 and make it fully operational by 2005. By 2007, SDG would have completed its Mindanao steel factory that would produce the raw materials for the Iligan factory.

SDG expects production capacity to build up from 4 million tons a year to a world-class level of 10 million tons a year, making the Philippines a major steel producer in Asean. SDG plans to sell 35 percent of its output to the domestic market (particularly the downstream steel industry) and 65 percent for export to Asia, specifically China, the world's biggest steel importer.

"The operation of the NSC factory in its present, non-integrated configuration (and even assuming that it gets steel slab imports) will result in heavy cost penalties from high transport and handling costs, substantial energy loss from hot rolling thick slabs and lower quality and recoveries," Guingona said.

Guingona has asked the President to direct the NSC management committee to "reconsider its approach toward re-operating the Iligan steel plant."

JAPAN-ASEAN EXCHANGE YEAR 2003



ASEAN-Japan

The countries of Southeast Asia and Japan have enjoyed a long history of exchange mainly through trade over the ages. Notably, the political and economic relationship has deepened over the years and a cooperative relationship prevailing in various fields has grown stronger in the modern era. This year, 2003, is a commemorative year for the deep relationship between ASEAN and Japan. The ASEAN Cultural Fund, established through the efforts of then PM Fukuda during his visit to ASEAN countries in 1977, is celebrating its 25th Anniversary.

Also, it is a year which marks an important stage in this long and sincere friendship. In January 2002, PM Koizumi proposed to further strengthen the partnership between ASEAN and Japan under the basic concept of "Acting together and advancing together". With this vision in mind, the countries of ASEAN and Japan are undertaking significant exchange programs in various fields, not only in politics and economics, but also in education, social and cultural activities.

ASEAN and Japan are acting together and advancing together as an act toward the future in their roles as "sincere and open partners".

The ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit

The commemorative Summit meeting will be held in Tokyo at the State Guest House in Tokyo on December 11th and 12th, 2003 and will be attended by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and all ten ASEAN leaders.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUMMIT

1. It is the crowning event of the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003. The Summit will be a historical occasion where all ASEAN leaders will come together outside of the region for the very first time.
2. Japan will announce its unwavering support for ASEAN and will promote sincere and open partnership with ASEAN to 'act together and advance together' in the new era.

CONCRETE RESULTS

1. ASEAN-Japan Basic Document
ASEAN and Japan will agree on a statement which will reaffirm the basic direction of future ASEAN-Japan cooperation and give a broad guideline of ASEAN-Japan Relationship.

2. ASEAN-Japan Joint Action Plan

In line with the Basic Document, the specific measures to be implemented in the near future will be completed.

3. Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Efforts will be made to initiate formal negotiation with Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia.

MAIN THEMES

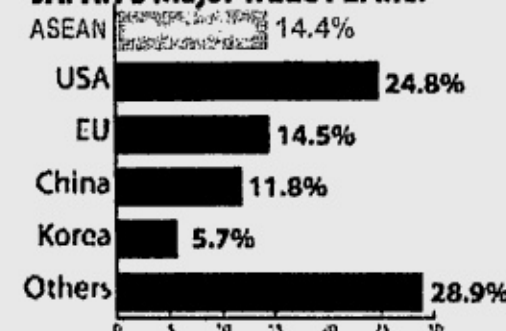
1. The importance of ASEAN-Japan relationship
2. Cooperation in political-security relations
3. Cooperation in economic relations
4. Cooperation in development relations
IAI Initiative for ASEAN Integration
Mekong Region Development
BIMP-EAGA (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Malaysia)
5. Cooperation in social and cultural relations

Tokyo, Japan - 11 and 12 December 2003

History and Future

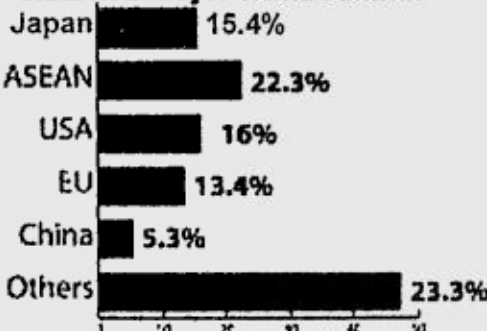
1967	Establishment of ASEAN
1976	First ASEAN Summit
1977	First ASEAN-Japan Summit
1984	Accession of Brunei Darussalam
1995	Accession of Socialist Republic of Vietnam
1997	Accession of Lao People's Dem. Rep. & Union of Myanmar
1997	First ASEAN+3 Summit
1999	Accession of Kingdom of Cambodia
	Realization of ASEAN 10
2002	PM Koizumi's visit to 5 ASEAN countries
2003	ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year

JAPAN'S Major Trade Partner



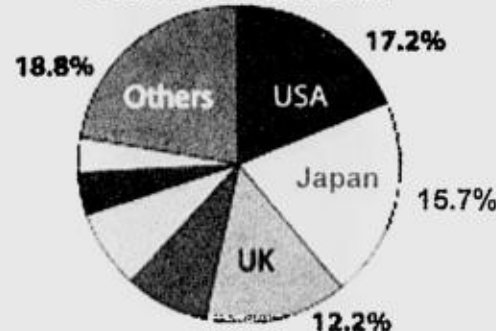
Total value of trade between ASEAN and Japan rose to over \$100 billion in 2001, 14.4% of Japan's total trade. Conversely, trade with Japan is 15.4% of ASEAN's trade. Japan is the largest export partner for Brunei, Indonesia, & Vietnam. In imports, Japan is the top partner for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

ASEAN'S Major Trade Partner



(source: IMI)

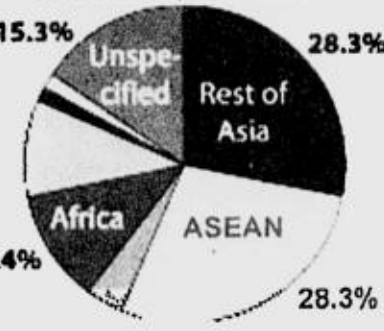
FDI in ASEAN 1995-2001



In foreign direct investment (balance of payment basis) in ASEAN from 1995 to 2001, Japan's share is 15.7% ranked second after the USA.

(source: ASEAN Secretariat)

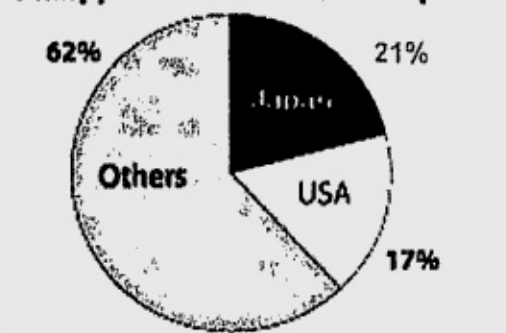
FY 2001 Japan's ODA



In 2001, total ODA towards ASEAN countries reached the \$2,108 million mark which accounts for a most 30% of Japan's overall ODA spending.

(source: MOFA)

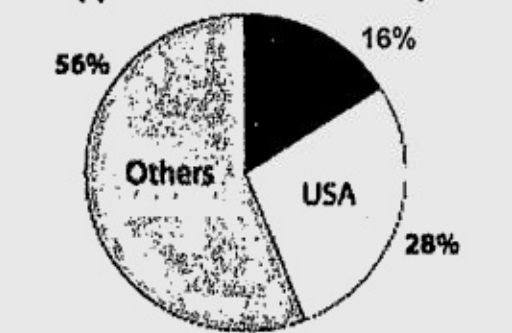
Philippines Trade Partner- Import



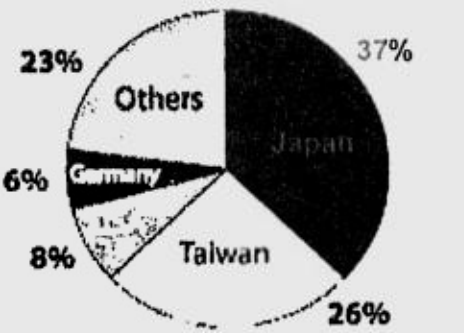
Total value of trade between the Philippines and Japan valued over \$6.9 billion in 2001, 21% of Philippines total trade. Conversely, trade with Japan is at \$5.05 billion 16% of Philippines exports.

(source: Embassy of Japan)

Philippines Trade Partner- Export



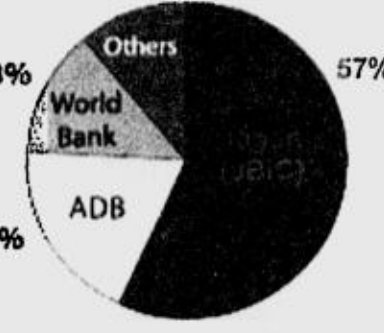
FDI in Philippines



In foreign direct investment (balance of payment basis) in the Philippines (2002), Japan's share is 37% the top investor in the country.

(source: ASEAN Secretariat)

ODA to the Philippines



In 2002, total Japanese ODA towards the Philippines totaled for 57%, greater than all other nation's ODA combined.

(source: NEDA)

Palace rejects appeal for stay of executions

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MALACANANG yesterday rejected an appeal by government lawyers for President Macapagal-Arroyo to reconsider her decision to lift a four-year moratorium on judicial executions on the ground that some of the death convicts could be innocent.

"The determination of guilt for those convicted of capital offenses is capped by a full and comprehensive review by the Supreme Court," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

"To say that we must [stay] an execution because of doubt as to the guilt of the criminal would be encroaching into the powers of the high court which we will not do," Bunye said.

Persida Acosta, the chief of the Public Attorney's Office which is handling about 400 death row cases, has appealed for a reconsideration, arguing that innocent convicts were at risk of being executed.

She said that since Ms Macapagal became President in January 2001, the PAO had secured the acquittal of 30 death row convicts and the commutation of 130 death sentences. She said the PAO has had a 50-percent success rate on its appeals of death penalty cases before the SC.

Execution of law

"This is proof that not all death convicts are criminals, and there may be many innocent persons who will be executed," Acosta said.

But Bunye said the role of the Executive was not to determine the guilt of the death convicts but to execute the law.

He also brushed aside the reported position of the Commission on Human Rights that the decision to lift the moratorium went against the country's commitment to international covenants as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Human Rights.

"The President has made a judgment call on the matter," Bunye said.

Bunye also reminded the media of the prohibitions against informing the death row convict of the hour of his scheduled execution and against interviewing the convict.

He released the guidelines stated in the Revised Penal Code and Republic Act No. 8177, the law designating lethal injection as the method of carrying out the death sentence.

Bunye said Press Secretary Milton Alingod will be communicating to media organizations an appeal for them to comply with the guidelines.

The President's decision to reinstate the death penalty is a blot on the administration's human rights record, according to Church, pro-life and lawyers' groups, many of which believe it was made to boost her chances in next May's elections.

International rights groups working with the United Nations

Human Rights Commission are also closely monitoring how the Philippines is implementing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other human rights accords to which the country is a signatory.

Suhas Chakma, director of the Asian Center for Human Rights (ACHR) in New Delhi, for example, expressed concern over Ms Macapagal's reinstatement of the death penalty in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

The UNHRC on Nov. 11 urged the Philippines "to take measures to repeal all laws which have made it possible to impose the death penalty."

The committee also urged the Philippines to comply with Article 6 (5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits the death penalty for crimes committed by people below 18 years old.

Two Church leaders in the Visayas have expressed their opposition to the lifting of the moratorium on executions.

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra said life should be respected at all cost.

"The Church can never allow human intervention to take away life. That is a right that belongs only to God," he added.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal said he would prefer re-educating the people on the traditional values of respecting life rather than re-imposing the death penalty.

'Restore catechism'

"There are so many ways. One is to restore the catechism or the basic teaching of the Catholic Church. Restore the values that we have imbibed when we were small children," he told reporters on Monday night.

Navarra said Ms Macapagal was "trying to be popular at the expense of human life."

Msgr. Victorino Rivas, vicar general of the Diocese of Bacolod, said Ms Macapagal may have been "pressured by the turn of events but that is not a reason for changing her mind because the death penalty is unacceptable, morally speaking."

Rivas said the reimposition of the death penalty could cause the President a lot of votes from Catholic Filipinos in 2004.

Presidential aspirant Raul Roco said the President has to "articulate a more persuasive rationale for the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty aside from deterrence."

The real issue is not deterrence but strict enforcement of the law by police authorities, Roco said in a statement. *With reports from Carla P. Gomez and Bernadette Parco, PDI Visayas Bureau and Maurice Malanes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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Reprieve seen for political prisoners

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will play Santa to a number of political prisoners languishing in the country's jails as she directed the Department of Justice to review cases of political offenders for possible release this Christmas.

In her statement on the 55th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Ms Macapagal said: "I have directed the DOJ to fast-track the review of cases of alleged political offenders for the possible release on bail, recognizance or pardon. I expect concrete results on this regard on or before Dec. 25."

The President said this would "demonstrate the government's commitment to continuously implement goodwill and confidence building measures to move forward the peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDF."

The President had declared a cessation of hostilities with the communist rebels starting yesterday up to Jan. 6 next year "to bring together the Filipino families to celebrate the good tidings of Christmas."

In a statement, the President said the suspension of military operations (Somo) was made upon the recommendation of the defense and military organization as a sign of their support for the peace process.

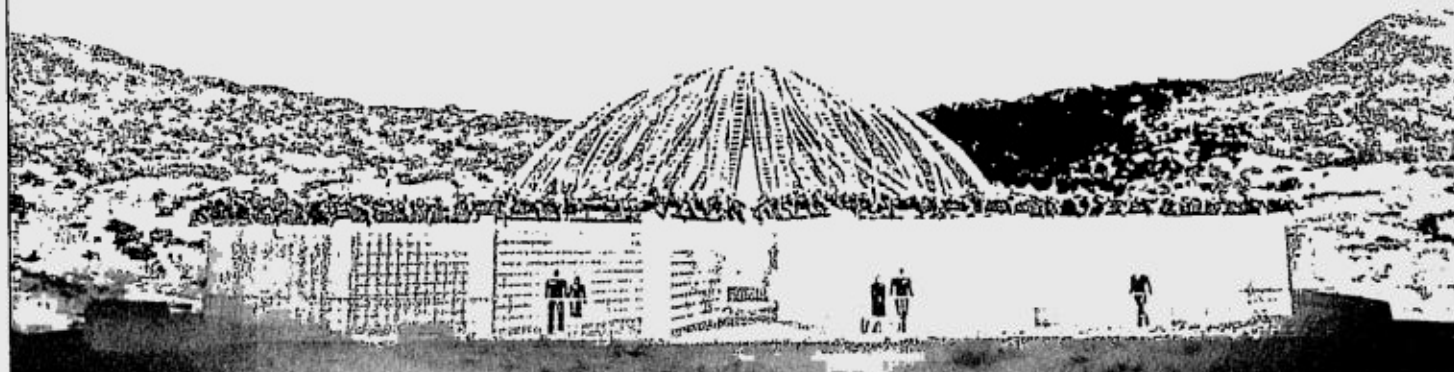
"We realize only too well that while our soldiers are ever prepared to go after insurgents, we must find the means to give respite to civilian communities affected by the conflict especially in the spirit of the Christmas season," the President said. "This goes with our firm commitment to a principled pursuit of peace negotiations and the resolution of conflict through non-violent means."

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Location Map



Fraport office searched

FRANKFURT—German airport operator Fraport AG said on Tuesday Frankfurt state prosecutors searched its offices the day before in connection with an airport terminal project in Manila that went sour and led to a major 2002 writedown.

A spokesman declined to say what the authorities were searching for in an unannounced raid that began in the morning and lasted until evening at the company's base at Frankfurt airport.

The spokesman said the search was not related to employees currently working at Fraport and declined further comment on the matter.

"The company cooperated with the action and confirms its position to prevent and avoid irregularities or to clear up if necessary," Fraport said in a statement.

Fraport scrapped its 2002 dividend payout after a 290 million euro (\$355 million) writedown on the Manila investment.

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Amatong named permanent finance chief

FINANCE Secretary Juanita Amatong has been appointed permanently to the position, replacing Jose Camacho who resigned last month, a presidential spokesman said yesterday.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced the appointment to her Cabinet yesterday, her spokesman, Ignacio Bunye told Reuters.

Amatong, who had previously expressed reluctance to succeed Camacho, had accepted the appointment, Bunye said.

Amatong has served as finance undersecretary under three different presidents.

Camacho, a seasoned investment banker who earned plaudits for negotiating international bond deals and for the partial success in capping a yawning budget deficit, resigned on Nov. 21 saying he was exhausted with the job.

Traders and analysts said it was crucial that a permanent finance secretary was appointed quickly to avoid market uncertainty amid political noise ahead of elections in May 2004.

The peso has slowly regained strength after hitting a record low of 55.85 per US dollar on Nov. 21, after Camacho said he would quit.

The currency—Asia's weakest this year—closed yesterday at P55.315 per dollar, slightly stronger than Monday's 55.325.

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Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	49.00	144.00	95.00/bot
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓	3.40	37.75	34.35/cap
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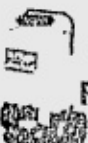
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Smokey Mountain is home again

THE PEOPLE of
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The first batch of residents of the former dumpsite community in Tondo, Manila, started moving in yesterday to the low-cost tenement complex that the government promised them eight years ago.

The National Housing Authority announced that 754 out of the 2,520 families awarded new homes are scheduled to relocate to the housing project from Dec. 9 to 15. The rest of the beneficiaries will follow beginning March next year.

NHA General Manager Edgardo Pamintuan said the families will be occupying seven out of the 21 five-story buildings making up the Smokey Mountain Development Reclamation Project which was started in the early part of Ramos administration.

Until its closure in 1994, the notorious Smokey Mountain dump came to symbolize the country's economic slump since the '80s under the Marcos regime. It got its name from its steep, smoldering mounds of trash that dwarfed the colony of scavengers that had grown around it through the years.

While waiting for the project's completion, the beneficiaries were made to stay in two-storey temporary dwellings that were part-wood part-concrete.

But with work at the complex repeatedly stalled for the past three administrations, the temporary structures have since fallen in disrepair while the occupants' population has almost doubled. Vol
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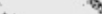
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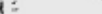
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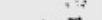
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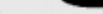


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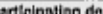
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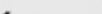
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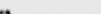
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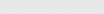
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FPJ says he's willing to give way to Lacson

From page A1

democratic process),” added the movie actor, who was a guest at the “Bulong Pulungan” media forum’s Christmas gathering at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel in Pasay City.

Informed of Poe’s willingness to give way to him, Lacson said: “That only confirms what I have said earlier—that he’s a real gentleman.”

Poe, variously known as FPJ and Da King, is scheduled to be proclaimed standard-bearer of the newly formed Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino at 10 a.m. today at the Hotel InterContinental in Makati City.

The coalition, made up of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino, PDP-Laban and People’s Reform Party, excluded Lacson from its selection process last weekend.

Lacson to withdraw?

But Lacson is expected to withdraw later from the presidential race, according to Aurora Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, sister of LDP president Sen. Edgardo Angara.

“My personal assessment is that Lacson will withdraw once FPJ is proclaimed. This way, the internal problems of the LDP will be sorted out,” the congresswoman said.

But Lacson reiterated at a press conference that even if Poe were proclaimed today, he was determined to run for president and would file his candidacy after Dec. 15, the first day of the filing period.

Talk with GMA

GMA-7 reported that Poe had a phone conversation with President Macapagal-Arroyo during the Bulong Pulungan gathering.

It said the President called Speaker Jose de Venecia, who then passed the phone to Poe sitting next to him. Like the actor, the Speaker was at the gathering to receive an award as one of the newsmakers of the year.

Asked about his brief conversation with Ms. Macapagal, Poe said: “Dapat hindi sabihin, pero nagkamustahan kami (I shouldn’t talk about it, but we said hello).”

Poe later told GMA-7 he was certain that he and Lacson would be able to meet and discuss what should be done. Asked how the opposition could be

united and what it would take for him to slide down to vice president, Poe merely said he and Lacson would meet to thresh out these issues.

Done deal

While Poe was attending the party at the Westin, former Negros Occidental Rep. Mike Romero, spokesperson of the LDP and of Angara, was announcing at a news conference at the Senate that Poe would be proclaimed opposition standard-bearer today.

Romero said it was a “done deal.” He said the resolution drafting Poe as standard-bearer would be signed by Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III for the LDP, Horacio “Boy” Morales for the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino, and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay or Lito Anzures for the PDP-Laban. Romero said Sotto, Poe’s spokesperson, would sign for Angara, who is in Mexico attending a United Nations conference on corruption.

Official acceptance

“After [today’s] announcement, we will await Poe’s official acceptance of his having been chosen by the coalition,” Romero said.

But curiously, neither Sotto nor Romero was certain that the actor would show up.

Asked if Poe would attend today’s event, Romero said: “We can never tell.”

No-show?

Sotto, on the other hand, said he doubted that Poe would be present because the proclamation was “a political affair” and a coalition activity.

Even a strategist in the Lacson camp said Poe would be a no-show.

“We received a tip that FPJ will not be around [today],” said the strategist who asked not to be named.

He also refused to say whether Angara’s absence was a calculated move aimed at mitigating the impact of Poe’s proclamation on the fate of the so-called united opposition.

Delighted

But Romero said Poe had “unofficially” informed Sotto of his acceptance of his nomination as standard-bearer.

“I understand from Sotto that FPJ was delighted,” Romero said, adding that Poe was informed of his nomination through a letter the other day.

But when asked about Poe’s acceptance, Sotto told reporters to just quote Romero.

According to Romero, LDP secretary general Agapito “Butz” Aquino, who is pro-Lacson, has been put on forced leave because Angara “cannot allow confusion to reign within the party.”

Romero said Antique Gov. Ike Zaldivar, LDP deputy secretary general, had been appointed to replace Aquino.

He also said talks were ongoing to unify other opposition parties and pro-Lacson LDP members with the coalition.

Still waiting

At his press conference, Lacson said he was still waiting to meet with Poe.

“The problem is, nobody seems to be communicating this thing to him,” the opposition senator said. “[It looks like] my offer to have a one-on-one meeting with him [has yet to reach him].”

Unilateral

Lacson described today’s proclamation as “unilateral,” saying it would be done by “people who I’m not even sure have the permission of FPJ to proclaim him.”

He also said that the proclamation would be “not valid” because no selection process had been conducted, and that during his first talk with Poe, the actor said he would not agree to a rigged and unfair process.

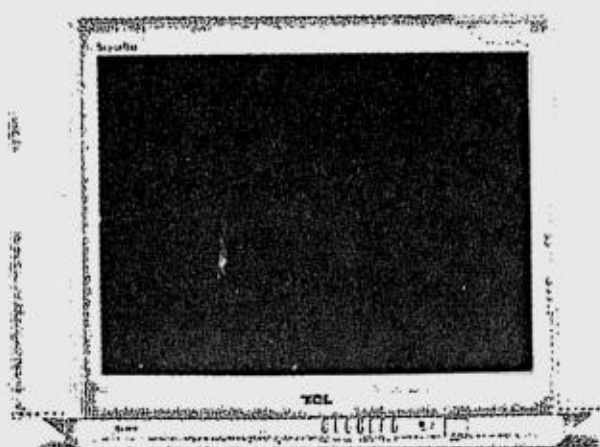
The senator said it was likely that Angara’s camp was “feeding” Poe wrong information.

For instance, he said, Poe was being told that he had been demanding certain Cabinet positions in exchange for pulling out of the presidential race.

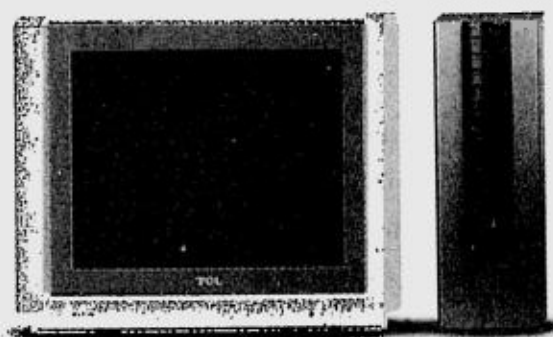
“I have never thought of asking positions and [making] other demands. That is not in my character. If he’s chosen [standard-bearer], so be it,” Lacson said.

The senator was dropped from the coalition’s selection process after he was named LDP standard-bearer by some party mates last week. The coalition said his nomination was unauthorized and illegal.

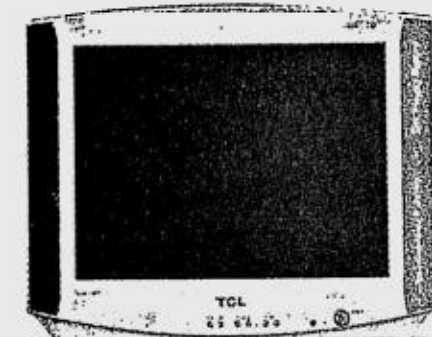
But Lacson reiterated yesterday that Angara knew about his plan to file his candidacy if the selection process would not be resolved before Dec. 15. He also said Angara knew and consented to his nomination as LDP standard-bearer. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Michael Lim Ubac*



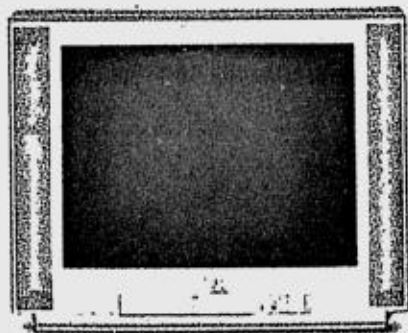
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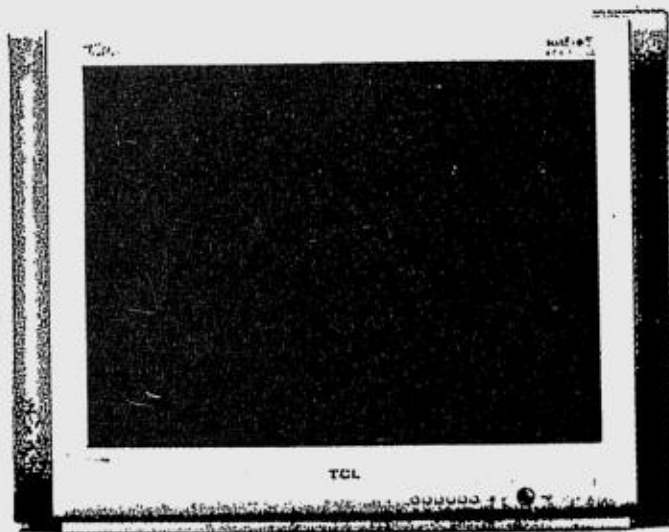
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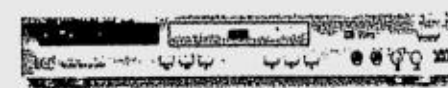
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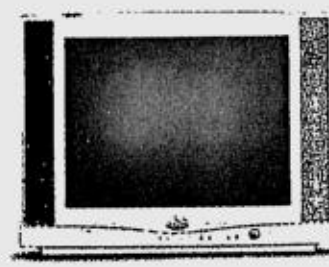
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Palace woos Roco anew; he reportedly rejected offer

From page A1

votes between them, according to the source. Drilon confirmed that top emissaries of Ms Macapagal met with De Villa the other night at his residence. "There was a dinner in the house," he said.

Birthday dinner

Drilon was quick to point out that De Villa, Romulo and Soliman were invited to dinner. Asked what was the occasion, the Senate President curtly said: "It was my birthday party." He said he hosted a similar dinner with his colleagues in the Senate last week.

Drilon refused to reveal what the group talked about. "I have no knowledge of what they talked about. I just invited them for a dinner." Pressed to give a categorical answer, he said: "I'm not in a position to reveal or make public what they talked about."

A Malacañang source denied that Romulo had met with De Villa specifically to discuss the proposed team-up. Soliman denied taking part in the meeting, which reportedly ended around midnight. "I don't know about that meeting," she said when reached by phone. She said she was in Ifugao province most of Monday.

The INQUIRER also tried to reach De Villa through his cell phone, but did not get a response.

When reached for comment, Roco said he was in General Santos City Monday and arrived in Manila at noon yesterday.

He reiterated that he was not sliding down. He said it should be Ms Macapagal who should consider withdrawing from the race. "She has been president and she has

failed," he said.

Leading GMA

"What's clear is that the people want a change of government. The only question is whom to replace it with," said Roco, who is consistently ahead of Ms Macapagal in surveys.

Results of two surveys conducted separately by Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations showed that Ms Macapagal would lose if the presidential election were held last month.

In its survey, Pulse Asia found that Roco would win in a three-or-four cornered fight with Ms Macapagal, actor Fernando Poe Jr. and opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson. In the SWS survey, Poe was tied at first place with Sen. Noli de Castro, who has not declared that he is running, followed by Roco, Ms Macapagal and Lacson.

In October, Roco disclosed that some representatives of Ms Macapagal met with him to ask him to be her running mate. The former education secretary rejected the offer.

Monday's meeting in Drilon's residence was supposed to be only between LP officials and De Villa, according to the source. The Liberal Party is setting up a dialogue with all presidential aspirants.

Ms Macapagal sat down with LP members at Drilon's residence on Saturday. LP officials later quoted her as saying she was "open" to teaming up with Roco. It is Roco's turn to face the party this week.

"LP has yet to decide on who it will support as its standard-bearer because the process has not yet been finished," said Drilon. With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.



MOVIE action king Fernando Poe Jr. and former Sen. Raul Roco are all smiles as they appear together at the Bulong Pulungan forum at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel Tuesday.

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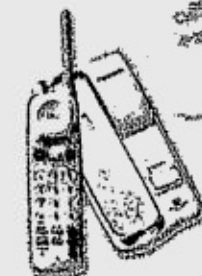
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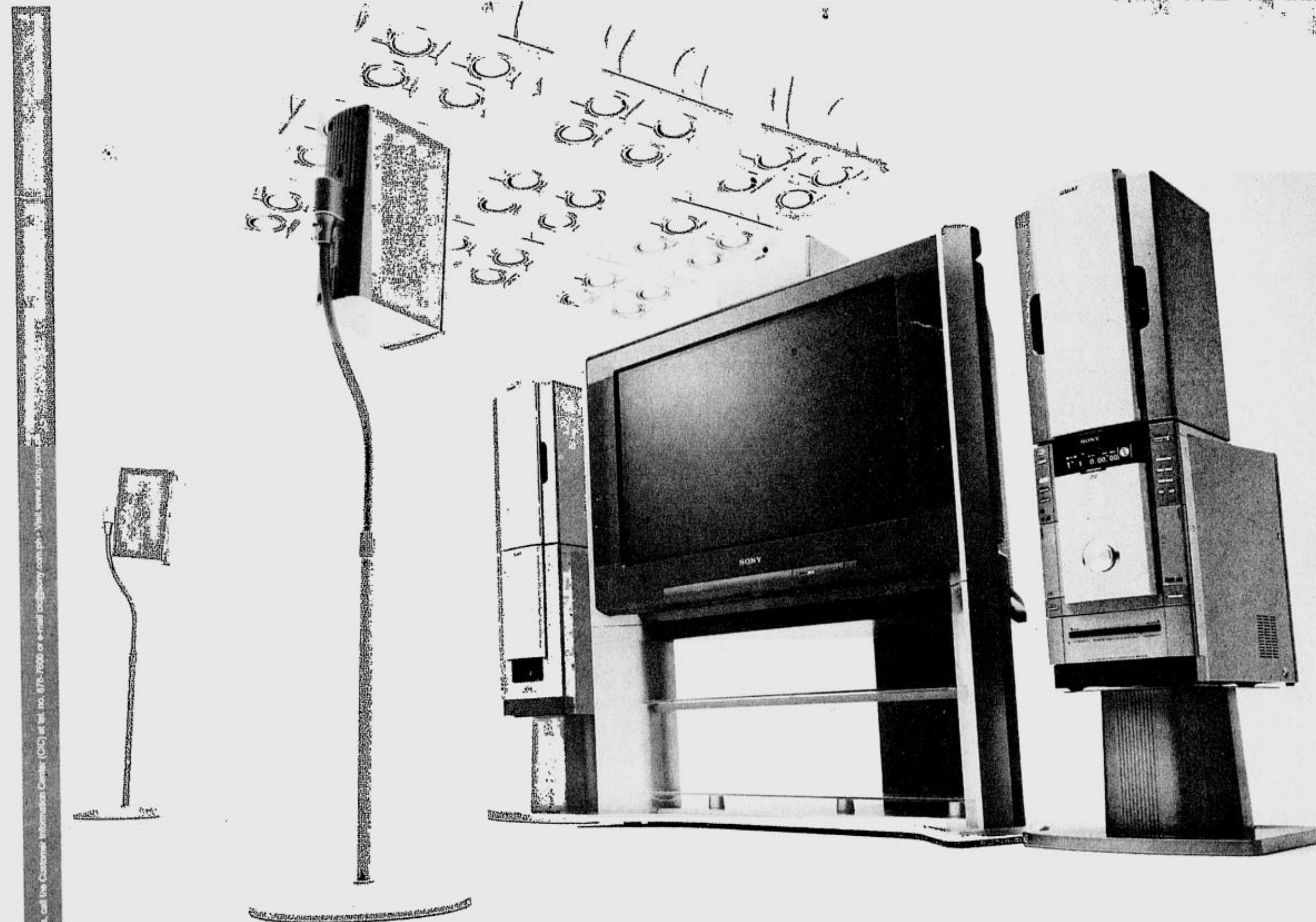


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VEGA THEATRE

6 martyrs, 4 heroes for Wall of Remembrance

From page A1

Rigos was a "prophetic voice" in the Church and condemned the excesses of martial rule. He was among the founders of the Wednesday Forum where issues and grievances were openly aired. As pastor of Ellinwood Church, he opened the church doors to activists and inspired his flock to speak without fear.

Tan, a Good Shepherd nun, is remembered for her "uncommon courage during the dark days of martial rule," for her leadership in

"mobilizing the religious sector to join the oppressed in word and deed as a way for the Church to respond to the signs of the times," and also for her compassion in "providing comfort and safety to those whose lives were at risk, in prison and wounded in body and spirit."

Summas, magnas

Of the "Bantayog martyrs," Balce, Belone, Hollero and Jallores were killed during military raids or encounters with soldiers

in rural areas.

Crismo, then a newly married university instructor and church worker, was abducted in Cagayan in 1980 and was never found. Dungoc, a leader who rallied his fellow Kalinga to protest military intrusion, died in a natural disaster in the Cordillera.

Of the 127 heroes and martyrs who have been honored as of last year, students numbered 42; church leaders, 24; lawyers, 17; journalists, 10; and government

officials and political leaders, 10.

The majority are college graduates (63) and college students (42). Six graduated summa cum laude, four magna cum laude and three cum laude. Four were bar topnotchers.

Many (56) died young, between the ages of 21 and 30. One-fifth (18) were *desaparecidos* or have not been found. A good number died as resistance fighters.

"In honoring our martyrs, we



FLOWERS are offered to brave Filipinos who stood up to the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the darkest days of martial law. The Wall of Remembrance is located at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City.

proclaim our determination to be free forever. As we enjoy our liberation, let us not forget those who fell during the night," said the Bantayog Foundation.

It also said that the acts of heroism of many individuals remained known only to immediate families and comrades, and that efforts were being made to document them.

Friends of Bantayog

The foundation is chaired by former Sen. Jovito Salonga, with Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco as vice chair and Quintin Doromal as executive director. The Friends of Bantayog was recently organized to assist the foundation.

Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and anti-martial law activist, will serve as guest speaker at this afternoon's program.

The activities will include the blessing of the Balay Bayani, which will house a mini-museum, library and café.

It is hoped that the Balay Bayani would become a "gathering place."

Defiant Pieta

The Bantayog ng mga Bayani is a 1.5-hectare mini-park located

at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Boulevard, beside the National Power Corp. building. Its landmark is a 45-foot bronze monument by sculptor Eduardo Castrillo that depicts a defiant Pieta.

Every year, a Bantayog committee gathers the names of deceased persons deemed worthy to be etched on the Wall of Remembrance. Their contributions to the cause of justice, freedom and democracy, as well as other aspects of their life and death, are thoroughly assessed by the Bantayog board.

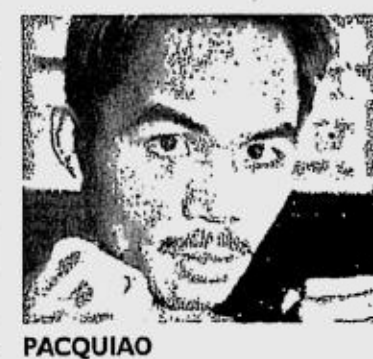
The names of those who were killed or died in any manner before the 1986 People Power uprising are put on the martyrs' list, and those who died of natural causes after 1986, on the heroes' list.

Excluded

But observers note that this system of classification has excluded a number of those worthy of honor.

For example, neither student leader Lean Alejandro nor labor leader and lawyer Rolando Olalia, both known anti-martial law activists who were killed after 1986 in a most brutal way by suspected military assailants, did not make it as a Bantayog hero or martyr.

Pacquiao needs votes for Fighter of the Year



PACQUIAO

From page A1

champion Marco Antonio Barrera now finds himself in a virtual election.

HBO, which broadcast the Nov. 16 fight, is conducting its annual Boxing Awards, and Pacquiao is in the running.

An email making the rounds among Filipinos online gets right to the point, like a jab to the face. "Manny Pacquiao needs your support. Please vote for him as the 2003

HBO Fighter of the Year and (for his win over Barrera as the) 2003 Upset of the Year."

Pulling ahead

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, the pride of Gen. Santos City was pulling ahead of Roy Jones Jr. as Fighter of the Year, with some 39 percent of the vote.

His decisive win over Barrera had 46 percent of the vote for Upset of the Year, but the Corrie Sanders-Wladimir Klitschko fight was running a close second.

HBO, the cable network which is better known in the Philippines for its movie channel, is a leader in pay-per-view TV, and a long-time broadcast carrier and sponsor of boxing fights.

'Legendary Nights'

"In HBO's 30 years of covering boxing, 2003 was one to remember," a note on its website explained. "HBO Boxing in 2003 featured rising stars, 12 weeks of Legendary Nights, major upsets, exciting rematches, and big knockouts. As the year ends, take a moment to reflect and vote on the 2003 HBO Fight of the year, Fighter of the year, Knockout of the year & Upset of the year."

The fight with Barrera was not included in the list of nominees for Fight of the Year, possibly because Pacquiao completely outclassed and outfought the greatest featherweight in history.

To vote for Pacquiao, one candidate who can truly claim to be an "iron fist," visit <http://www.hbo.com/boxing/games/>.

John Nery

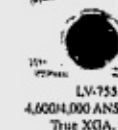
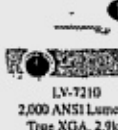
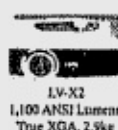
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5th bleak Christmas for Mamburao 6

From page A1

the employ of former Congressman Jose Villarosa. But we are not. The only thing that involves us with Villarosa is the way we sought his assistance in having the land we were tilling in Mamburao covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program," Matricio said.

Matricio was a national council member of the militant peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas when he was arrested for the murders in 1998. The other five were also members of the peasant group in their community.

Kuratong judge

The murder charges against alleged mastermind Villarosa and the six farmers for the killing of Barangay Captain Michael Quintos and his brother Paul on Dec. 13, 1997 are being heard by controversial Quezon City Judge Teresa Yadao.

"If she found no probable cause to continue the Kuratong Baleleng case against Sen. Panfilo Lacson, then she should also see no probable cause in our case. Ka Roger (New People's Army spokesperson Gregorio Rosal) has already claimed responsibility for the killing and cleared us of any involvement," Matricio said.

Death in NBI

Villarosa has since posted bail while another accused, farmer Balbino Fernandez, died a few years back while in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation. The NBI said Fernandez died of a heart attack while the other farmers believed that he succumbed to torture.

"They did everything to me. They punched me, kicked me then subjected me to water cure," Hermoso, also 50, said referring to the torture he allegedly suffered at the hands of NBI investigators tasked with solving the Quintos murders.

"I signed my confession because one of the NBI agents told me more would die if I continued to refuse claiming responsibility for something I didn't do. I could bear the pain but I couldn't take others dying because of me," Hermoso said.

Rancor

While Matricio, Hermoso and the other accused hold rancor in their hearts for Ricardo Quintos and the NBI for their detention, they've somehow made something good out

of their imprisonment.

"We are able to talk to the other inmates about their rights and the situation the country is in right now," said Matricio, a former peasant leader.

"We ask them things like what led them to a life of crime. If they had not been poor would they have turned to selling drugs?" Matricio said.

Aside from being a "mayor" or cell leader, Matricio takes care of the livelihood program at the Quezon City penitentiary. As leader and livelihood program coordinator, he has de-



QUINTOS



VILLAROSA

veloped an influence of sorts inside jail.

Livelihood programs

"Many of them really had no choice. So we help them by teaching them how to earn through our livelihood programs and by discussing with them the problems of the country that led them to a life of crime," Matricio said.

The penitentiary's handicrafts program makes use of old newspapers, rolled up into thin yet sturdy sticks. These sticks are then glued together to make strong house decors such as picture frames, letter holders, Home Sweet Home signs, lanterns and toys such as dollhouses and the popular galleons.

"Somehow, we get our fellow inmates to listen," Matricio said. "They in turn get to know things about human rights issues, national problems that need to be addressed and issues that somehow affect them."

Proud of children

As their sixth Christmas in jail draws near, Matricio no longer expects his family to visit him. He said he himself told his wife and children to just spend their Christmases without him in Mindoro.

"It's quite difficult for them to come here just to celebrate Christmas. They're better off there," Matricio said, adding that the KMP's annual Christmas get-together with them in jail is the only holiday treat he is looking forward to each year.

"But I'm proud of my children. They know and they're proud that we are here not because we are criminals but because we are political prisoners, jailed because of our work for genuine land reform in Mindoro," he said.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

31 US troops hurt in Iraq bomb attack

MOSUL, Iraq—A car bomb attack on a military barracks near the northern city of Mosul early Tuesday wounded 31 American troops, just hours after three soldiers died in a road accident in central Iraq, the military said.

The attack occurred at 4:45 a.m. local time when a car drove to the gate of the base of the 101 Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade in the town of Talafar, 50 km west of Mosul, spokesman Maj. Trey Cate said.

Guards opened fire on the vehicle and moments later it blew up. "Whether it was a suicide attack or not, I don't know," Cate said.

A total of 31 soldiers were

wounded, mostly by debris and flying glass. None of the injuries were life-threatening, he said.

Meanwhile, three US soldiers died and one was injured when an embankment collapsed beneath their armored personnel carriers north of Baghdad, the military said Tuesday.

"The accident was not a result of hostile action," Lt. Col. William Macdonald said.

The soldiers belonged to the 2nd Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade, he said.

The deaths bring to 448 the number of US soldiers who have died in Iraq since the US-led invasion on March 20. Of those, 308 have died as a result of hostile action. The British military has reported 52 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported one each.

On Monday, insurgents shot and killed a US soldier who was guarding a gas station in the city of Mosul 400 km north of Baghdad.

"Four Iraqi males traveling in vehicles stopped approximately 50 meters from a gas station in Mosul and opened fire on coalition soldiers guarding the station," Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said. "One coalition soldier died of gunshot wounds in that attack."

Hours after the killing, three other US soldiers in Mosul were wounded when a bomb exploded as their patrol passed by.

An Iraqi policeman died Monday while trying to defuse an explosive device in Baqouba, 60 km north of Baghdad, Kimmitt said.

Kimmitt said there were 18 engagements between Iraqi guerrillas and US-led coalition forces in the past week, down significantly from previous weeks.

"These numbers are significantly lower than recent norms, although we anticipate and are fully prepared for any upturn in attacks in the days and weeks ahead," he said.

On Monday, the UN Security Council condemned the attacks by insurgents, noting that the assaults also have targeted foreigners working in the country, including Italians, Spaniards, Japanese,

South Koreans and Colombians.

A council statement urged all nations "to fully cooperate in the efforts to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these attacks."

A South Korean company said Monday it would withdraw its 60 workers from a power line project in Iraq because gunmen killed two of its engineers. Seoul's Omu Electric Co. has been building transmission towers in the north of the country since October under contract with Washington Group International, based in Boise, Idaho. AP

US, EU rights panel express concern about Russia poll

WASHINGTON—The United States expressed concern Monday about the fairness of Russia's parliamentary elections, saying the worries highlighted Moscow's need to pursue democratic reforms.

Citing criticism by Europe's top rights and democracy body, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said: "We share those concerns, a fact which underlines the importance of Russian legislators' dedicating themselves to pushing through the political and economic reform agenda."

That includes "building those institutions of democracy that are important to free and democratic states, such as a free press, political parties, respect for rule of law, to name a few," he told reporters.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's party and its allies triumphed in Sunday's election, which crushed the communists and shut liberal parties out of the chamber for the first time in the post-Soviet era.

But the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe criticized the vote as "free, but certainly not fair," singling out abuse of administrative resources and unbalanced media coverage.

At the US state department, spokesperson Richard Boucher seconded those concerns and called for legislators to continue work on reforms.

"We would certainly hope that the newly elected Duma will press ahead on democratic and economic reform and continue to support the US-Russia partnership," he told reporters.

The leading opposition Communist Party suffered devastating losses in the election to the lower house State Duma. Its leader refused to accept the results, accusing the Kremlin of vote-rigging.

In September, after a summit with Putin, President George W. Bush said: "I respect president Putin's vision for Russia: a country at peace within its borders, with its neighbors and with the world, a country in which democracy and freedom and rule of law thrive," Bush said. AFP

Teenage sniper suspect killed cats as a child

CHESAPEAKE, Va.—Teenage sniper suspect Lee Malvo killed cats as a child, threatened suicide if his mother left him and was looking for a father figure when John Muhammad, now a convicted murderer, entered his life, a psychologist testified on Monday.

Malvo, 18, is on trial in Virginia for one of 10 sniper-style shooting deaths that terrorized the Washington, D.C., area in October 2002. Muhammad, his alleged accomplice, was convicted of murder last month in a separate killing and jurors recommended the death penalty.

Malvo's lawyers contend he is innocent by reason of insanity because Muhammad, 42, brainwashed him at the time the killings were committed. If convicted, Malvo could face a death sentence or life in prison without parole for the Oct. 14, 2002, murder of FBI analyst Linda Franklin.

Dewey Cornell, a University of Virginia psychologist who interviewed Malvo for 54 hours over the past several months, testified that Muhammad filled Malvo with hate and racial prejudice toward white people.

Cornell said Muhammad made Malvo fall asleep to the sound of hate-filled speeches, including material selectively culled from the writings of civil-rights figure Malcolm X. One such tape began with music by reggae artist Bob Marley but then shifted to hateful speech by someone else, Cornell testified.

The psychologist said Malvo told him that Muhammad "taught him from very early on that right and wrong do not exist... that right and wrong are made up by the government." Cornell told jurors that Malvo suffered from a "dissociative disorder" at the time of the sniper shootings, and said this disorder would require extensive treatment over many years. Reuters

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Security forces confronting new threat: cyber terrorism

LONDON — Counter-terrorism agents are confronting a new threat—teams of computer hackers aiming to maximize the death toll in terror attacks by paralyzing the emergency rescue services.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, police and intelligence officials studying terror plots have been forced to add a new dimension to their planning: groups of highly skilled cyber-terrorists.

"The first cyber terrorism attack will most likely not be somebody targeting a company. What we will see is a blended, or multi-prong attack," said Richard Starnes, director of incident response for British telecoms firm Cable & Wireless and an advisor to Scotland Yard's

Computer Crime Unit.

A potential scenario might be this: A truck carrying explosives races toward the main entrance of a city center rail station at rush hour, just as a computer whiz hacks into the emergency response telephone network.

There is a huge blast. With the communications system knocked out, police and rescue units are paralyzed. Emergency teams lose precious minutes attending to the scene and the toll of dead and injured climbs.

This type of chain of events was, until recently, spoken about in hypothetical terms. Now, police forces and intelligence agencies around the world say it's not

a matter of if, but when.

Security officials have many names for a scenario in which computer attacks are combined with a real world terror plot—"Cyber Terrorism," "Blended Digital Threats," even "Digital Armageddon."

With more of the world's critical infrastructure—from power grids to air traffic control networks to emergency response hotlines—linked to computer networks, the risk of a hacking intrusion has become all the more tangible.

And terror groups, already adept users of the latest technologies, are honing their hacking skills to maximize bloodshed, experts said.

"We will see a force multiplier

effect where you hit a chemical factory, for instance, at the same time you lodge a digital attack. That way, they can ratchet up the body count by delaying the response time for essential emergency services," Starnes said.

A wave of cybercrime and damaging e-mail viruses has made Internet security an urgent topic at the highest levels of government and law enforcement.

Last week, industry and national security officials met in both California and Germany to brainstorm on the matter. This week, leaders from over 200 nations will meet at a United Nations IT conference in Geneva to discuss boosting network security.

Reuters

Britain spent \$155M for munitions at start of Iraq war

LONDON—More than £90 million (\$155 million, 125 million euros) of missiles, bombs and ammunition were fired by British forces in the first 11 days of the war in Iraq, government figures showed Monday.

Details of the value of munitions used by Britain in the US-led campaign, which was launched on March 20, were available only for the last financial year, which ended on March 31.

From the start of hostilities until that date, £61 million worth of missiles and bombs were launched and dropped, £32 million worth of ammunition

fired.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram said the figures were part of the £847 million overall cost of operations in Iraq in the last financial year.

The defense ministry was seeking an extra £1.2 billion of government funds to cover the cost of peacekeeping duties and other associated "urgent operational requirements," he said.

Last week, Britain's finance minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, put the cost of the "war on terror" so far, including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, at £5.5 billion.

AFP

US launches biggest Afghan ground operation

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—The US military said on Monday it had launched its biggest ever ground operation against Islamic militants in Afghanistan but worried a bungled attack that killed nine children could alienate Afghans.

The military said it launched "Operation Avalanche" at the weekend across eastern and southern Afghanistan, where Taliban and allied Islamic militants have regained strength and carried out a series of attacks on foreign troops and aid workers.

About 2,000 of the 11,500 US-led troops in the country are taking part in the mission designed to kill or capture militants and make the area safe for aid and reconstruction work, US spokesperson Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty told a news briefing.

"This one is the largest we have ever designed," he said at the US headquarters at Bagram north of Kabul.

Hilferty said the operation involved four infantry battalions as well as soldiers from the Afghan National Army and militia.

State-run Kabul Television said US-led and Afghan forces had wounded two militants and detained 15 in Sayed Karam district of the southern province of Paktika and discovered caches of artillery and mortar ammunition. It gave no other details.

Overshadowing the offensive are the deaths of nine children killed by a US air strike on the village of Petaw in the southern province of Ghazni on Saturday.

They are the latest civilians killed accidentally by US-led forces pursuing remnants of the Taliban regime overthrown in late 2001 and members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Hilferty said the strike by A-10 "tank-buster" aircraft firing 30mm high-explosive and incendiary rounds had been carefully planned to kill a "known terrorist." "Unfortunately, when we got there, we found the bodies of nine children and one adult man."

Afghan officials said the intended target, Mullah Wazir, was not at home at the time. Hilferty conceded that villagers had said the man killed was someone else.

Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Hamas suicide attacks

GAZA—A top official of Islamic group Hamas said on Monday the recent lull in Palestinian militant suicide attacks against Israel was just a break between waves. "The martyrdom operations come as waves so there are gaps between the waves," Hamas chief spokesperson Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi said in an interview. "We are just in the period of a gap between waves." A day after the collapse of talks among Palestinian factions on a complete ceasefire with Israel—which Hamas opposed—Rantissi said Palestinian militants were emboldened by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's domestic woes and US problems in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Reuters

Vietnam cardinal's Mass

HO CHI MINH CITY—Thousands of Vietnamese Catholics on Tuesday celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving in Vietnam's largest city with the newest cardinal appointed by the Vatican and approved by the communist government. Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pham Minh Man, 69, made his hometown debut wearing the red cap of his new appointment to a capacity crowd of more than 1,500 at the French colonial-era Notre Dame cathedral that was filled with cheers and applause. Hanoi's nod for the elevation of Man is a sign of its warming ties with the Vatican despite a lack of diplomatic relations. Catholicism, which was spread in Vietnam by the French, was viewed with suspicion because of its ties with the colonial power.

Reuters

Chinese serial killers

BEIJING—Chinese courts have sentenced two serial killers to death in a pair of unrelated cases that resulted in a total of 27 deaths and horrified a nation. One of the killers found his victims at video-game parlors and Internet cafes. Huang Yong, 29, was sentenced Tuesday for killing 17 young men he had lured to his home from Internet cafes and video arcades, China Central Television reported. Huang was arrested earlier this month after his latest target managed to escape a torture session by promising to support him in his old age, Chinese newspapers have reported. When police went to arrest Huang, they uncovered the remains of more than a dozen young men in his home.

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Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
Editor in Chief LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC
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Unfinished business

THE GOVERNMENT is on a roll. Amid a loud public outcry, coming especially from the Chinese-Filipino community and the business sector, for tougher—and even drastic—measures against kidnap-for-ransom syndicates, the police have arrested or killed three of the top 10 kidnapping suspects in the Philippine National Police's order of battle over a period of just two weeks. The string of PNP successes followed closely the killing last month of the Chinese-Filipino financial executive Betti Chua who bled to death in the hands of her kidnappers.

Last Sunday, it was the turn of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to chalk up another major victory in the war against crime and terrorism. Military intelligence agents and troopers from the 33rd Infantry Battalion and the Light Armored Company captured Ghalib Andang, alias "Commander Robot," after a gun battle in Indanan, Sulu, in which he was severely wounded on both legs.

Andang is best known as one of the leaders and the key planner of the Abu Sayyaf group that carried out a daring raid on the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan in April 2000 and took 21 hostages, most of them European tourists. The hostages were freed in batches over a period of one year, after payment of millions of dollars in ransom.

Andang is also believed to have been involved in the May 2001 abduction of 20 tourists and workers, including American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan as well as six preachers of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Jolo, two of whom were later beheaded. Military officials also tagged Andang as the leader of the Abu Sayyaf group that pulled off several kidnappings from as early as 1993, including those of two Spanish missionary sisters, an American priest and three Chinese businessmen. He earned a reputation for ruthlessness after the beheading of the son of a doctor when ransom payment was delayed. And he gained international notoriety by presenting himself before the international media as the leader and spokesman of the group that has held more than a dozen Western hostages for about a year.

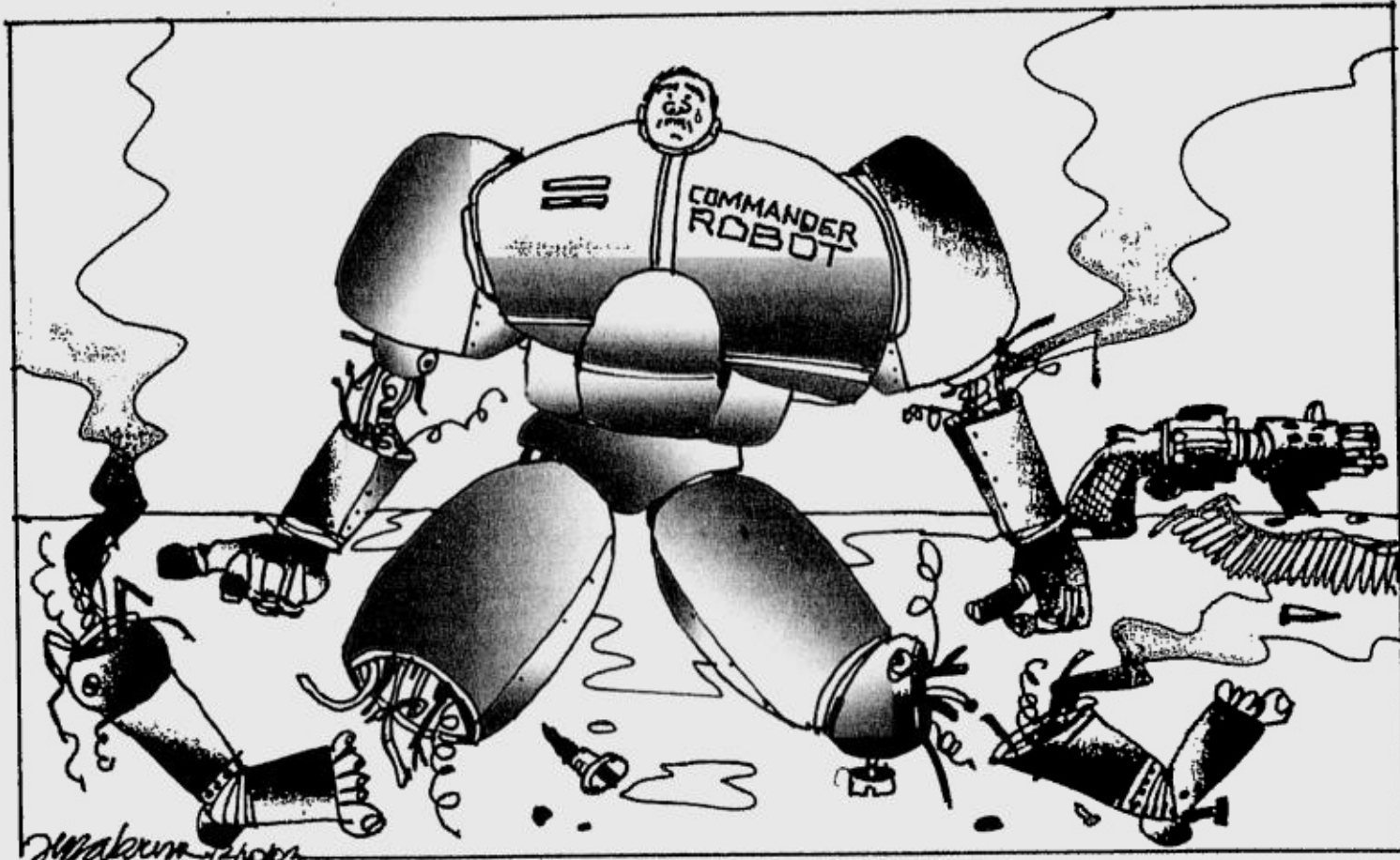
This criminal record, coupled with the Abu Sayyaf's suspected links with the al-Qaida international terrorist network, makes Andang as big a catch as they come. Until his death in June last year, only Abu Sabaya could out-talk Andang, and now only Khadafy Janjalani and possibly Radulan Sahiron outrank him in the Abu Sayyaf hierarchy. Indeed for most people, Andang represents the face of terror in this part of the world.

And while he now claims to have given up the life of crime after the Sipadan kidnapping, Andang wasn't done yet. Military officials said he was planning another kidnapping when he was trailed and captured.

Thus, the military and the Macapagal administration have very good reasons to crow about his arrest. President Macapagal-Arroyo described the arrest as a "heavy blow" to the Abu Sayyaf and vowed to keep putting "relentless pressure" on all terrorists until they are all "accounted for and they no longer pose a threat." However Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya seemed to have gotten carried away, saying the fall of Andang brought "closure to the Sipadan hostage crisis." Not yet. A look at the "Wanted" posters put out by the government after the United States offered millions of dollars as bounty for their capture will show that four of the five top Abu Sayyaf leaders are still out there, maybe just waiting for the right time to unleash their brand of terrorism. That is one big unfinished business for the military, and until these men are killed or captured, it would be premature to think that the threat of more kidnappings and more beheadings has ebbed.

Closing the book on the Sipadan crisis now will also leave many puzzling questions unanswered. For one thing, some officials of the Estrada administration have been accused of pocketing part of the ransom money by some of the hostages. Government negotiators also talked about the difficult time they had with local officials in Sulu. And then there is the matter of getting back at least part of the ransom money to make sure nobody will enjoy the fruits of criminal activities.

Andang should be able to shed some light on these intriguing questions if he could be persuaded to talk. And precisely because he might have some explosive information, the authorities should make doubly certain that he stays alive and in prison. Another great escape or accidental death will be unacceptable.



Why the insistence on partial automated counting?

WHY do the congressmen and senators insist on only a partial automated counting, instead of a nationwide counting of votes in next year's elections? The law says it should be nationwide. The Commission on Elections says it has more than enough counting machines: it has 2,000 of these machines although it needs less than that; the rest will be held in reserve in case some machines break down. But Congress is going to pass (or has already passed) a joint resolution calling for partial automation.

Why? *Nakapagtataka*. Suspicious. In the first place, I don't think a mere resolution can amend or replace a law. A resolution is not a law even if the President signs it. Election lawyer Romulo Makalintal, who was the guest at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday thinks so, too. So why are they pushing partial automation even if they have to violate the law?

In the second place, the Comelec is an independent constitutional body whose only purpose is to conduct elections. It is supposed to be the supreme authority when it comes to elections and it is supposed to know what it is doing, its commissioners being election experts. So why is Congress telling it in a mere resolution—not a law—where to have automated counting and where not to have any? In fact, congressmen are quarreling over which areas will have the counting machines. Some want to have machines in their districts, others don't.

In the resolution, only a minority of provinces, cities and municipalities will have automated counting. Others will count the votes the old way: manually. And yet the Comelec claims it can have automated counting nationwide. But Congress is telling it: No, we want it to be only partial. Hmmm.

How will the elections be conducted in places with counting machines? First, the ballots will be big, the size of a regular bond paper, because there will be many candidates, national and local. The letters will necessarily be smaller than usual because the big number will have to fit in the paper, front and back. The paper is a special one with security

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



features to prevent bogus ballots. The counting machine will reject any other paper.

Big as it is, you cannot fold the ballot when you drop it in the ballot box. The counting machine will spit it out if it has been folded. Therefore, the Comelec will need new, bigger ballot boxes because the new ballot will not fit into the slit in the old ballot box. It will need 250,000 new ballot boxes, one for each precinct.

The voter will not write the names of his candidates on the ballot. He will only shade the tiny boxes opposite their names. There are special pens to do this. No other pen will do as the machine will reject ballots on which the wrong pen was used.

The ballots will not be counted in the precincts as we used to do. They will be taken in the ballot boxes to the provincial capitol or city and municipal hall where the counting machines are.

The ballots will be fed to the machines in batches and will be counted automatically, like a printing press. There will be very little handling of the ballots by human hands. Party representatives and watchers cannot examine each ballot looking for telltale marks as they used to do. The machine will do that for them; it will reject any ballot that has any irregularity.

Voters like to stay up late and watch the counting in their precincts; they want to know which candidates won in their localities. There will be none of that in areas with the counting machines. The results will come out of the city or municipal halls or provincial capitol. When a candidate loses and he

asks his watchers what happened, they wouldn't be able to give him any answer. All they would know is that those are the numbers that the machine counted. No arguments, no haggling during the counting.

Theoretically, results will be known in 24 to 48 hours, unlike in the old days when it took weeks or months for the winners to be known.

With the partial automation, results will be fast in areas with counting machines but slow in those with manual counting. Thus, candidates losing in areas with machines will have time to catch up in areas with manual counting. And this is where the danger lies. This is when and where cheating will take place.

When you know you're losing, won't you do everything possible to catch up with votes from areas with slow manual counting? This could be the reason why members of Congress want only partial automation. They want to have a chance to use magic. The slower the counting, the better for those who are losing.

But the purpose of automation is faster counting to prevent cheating. So why do some politicians want to slow down the counting?

That is only one problem. There are many others. For example, politicians are considered resigned when they file their certificates of candidacy for higher positions. All except senators and other officials whose terms are not ending. If a senator runs for president or vice president, for example, and he loses, he can go back to the Senate to serve the remainder of his term.

It wasn't like that before. But when the ban on political advertising was repealed, the resignation exemption to senators and others suddenly appeared as a rider in the bill.

This is unconstitutional for two reasons: first, it is a rider; a bill cannot have more than one subject matter. Second, it is class legislation: it benefits one class, the senators, at the expense of other officials.

Lessons

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



shows there are more powerful forces at work in elections than party unity.

Or indeed resources, organization and the help of big business and religious groups. There have been three presidential elections in the country since 1986—the "snap elections" of that year and the elections of 1992 and 1998—and in none of those did resources, organization and "incumbency" (in the broad sense of being the standard bearer of the party in power) prove decisive. The "snap elections" of course were another matter entirely. It was the first presidential elections after 1946 that were "ideological," or where the people voted not just for individuals but for what they stood for. There was another "ideological" election in the past, but it was a senatorial rather than presidential one. That was in 1971 when the people voted all the LP senatorial candidates except one in protest against the Plaza Miranda bombing. The incumbent, Marcos, lost the "snap elections," although the count showed otherwise. Indeed, as it turned out, he lost it in more ways than one.

Mitra and Jose de Venecia lost the next two ones. Both were Speakers of the House, both were the heads of the ruling parties, both commanded unlimited resources, both had a reputation for being free with taxpayers' money. Both lost anyway. That is the other lesson given by the previous elections. It is not just that organization and resources and party in power are no longer decisive in winning presidential elections, it is that being seen as a *trapo* is decisive in losing them. Mitra and De Venecia did not just lose, they lost badly. Though not so easy to define, a *trapo* is generally thought to

be someone who so craves power he—or she—will do anything to get it. Mitra was seen as that, De Venecia was seen as that, GMA is seen as that. That is how GMA will probably fare as well.

If the last two presidential elections at least are anything to go by, media projection or popularity is the most decisive element in winning presidential elections today. Entertainment personalities have a natural advantage there—or at least in national elections. In local ones, money and organization still count for everything; I still think Rudy Fernandez would have won if he had run for senator instead of mayor of Quezon City.

That is what explains the scramble for public office by movie stars, basketball players and TV show hosts. I personally think TV projection now beats movie projection: I think Noli de Castro has a bigger following now than FPJ. Indeed, that is what explains GMA's own route to power. She became sufficiently popular to trounce her rivals in the vice-presidential race in 1998 by the route of show biz. After 1995, she stopped talking economics and started appearing in burning orphanages hugging fearful children.

To imagine that he will be hobbled critically by Panfilo Lacson running as an opposition candidate as well is to indulge in wish fulfillment. Personally, I think the only way FPJ can be stopped is for the elections to turn into something akin to the "snap elections" of 1986. That is to say, for the elections to turn "ideological," for the voters to see there is something vastly more important than the candidates themselves. That is for the elections to take on an urgent, or desperate, note, for the voters to feel that there is something more at stake than a choice of personalities. That is not entirely impossible. The situation today is a most desperate one, the choice today is one between life and death.

But that can't benefit GMA who is seen as the source of the desperation. It can only benefit Raul Roco who will be thrust as the alternative.

In a bind

ANALYSIS

Amando
Doronila

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has sailed into the whirlwind from the backlash against her decision last Friday to lift the three-year moratorium on the execution of at least 1,000 convicts facing the death penalty for kidnapping, murder, rape, drug trafficking and other heinous crimes.

The President lifted the ban after caving in to the demand by the Filipino-Chinese community for resumption of the executions in the wake of the wave of kidnapping for ransom and the murder of some abduction victims as a deterrent to the rise of kidnappings. The reaction of the community, including a threat from some of its members that they would pack up and leave the country if the kidnappings were not curbed, was so politically damaging to the President that she rejected the clamor in the past that executions did not stop heinous crime. She said that executions "may have given us some form of emotional release and a transient sense of retribution and security."

With the reversal of her earlier position, the President has put herself in a bind. While she won the applause of the Filipino-Chinese community and the hard-line sectors in the security forces, the President provoked a powerful fall-out from the Catholic Church, including its politically-potent ward, El Shaddai, human rights organizations and the European Union, which has been putting pressure on Philippine governments to erase capital punishment from the criminal code.

When the President lifted the ban, she faced the dilemma of whether alienating the Filipino-Chinese community was more politically harmful to her electoral chances in the 2004 elections than the backlash from the anti-capital punishment constituency. The President obviously miscalculated the backlash against a decision that was apparently motivated to court the favor of the Filipino-Chinese community, traditionally a large source of election contribution. The inability of the administration to control the kidnappings ahead of the 2004 elections has played into

the hands of her hard-line political rivals who have been highlighting the law and order problem as a major issue in the elections.

There is no reason or evidence to believe that the lifting of the moratorium or the new accent on retribution would intimidate crime syndicates into stopping this nefarious activity. The President earlier argued that the answer to the crime wave was effective law enforcement, and the government is only beginning to show that through its national-anti-kidnapping task force and other tough measures like curfews and check points. Tough law enforcement was bringing some results albeit not dramatic enough to reassure the Filipino-Chinese community.

The administration tried to conceal its cave-in to pressure by adopting a posture that was neither correct nor sufficient enough to be a deterrent to the kidnapping wave. It sought to please both the anti-capital punishment groups and the hard-line advocates of execution. The President tried to be selective in the executions. She said that executions would be resumed on those convicted of kidnapping for ransom, obviously an attempt to appease the Filipino-Chinese community, but a few days after, to pacify the anti-capital punishment constituency, the administration waffled again, saying that the execution of convicted high-profile drug dealers would not be stayed.

The waffling of the President reassured neither the Filipino-Chinese community nor the opponents of capital punishment, both of which were left in doubt about the consistency of the Presi-

dent's political will. The President left the impression that political expediency and opportunism had motivated her flip-flop. According to administration officials, the President had "agonized" over her decision. She told a press conference at Camp Crame that "Much as I am averse, as a matter of principle, to taking of human lives," she must "yield to the higher public interest when dictated by extraordinary circumstances."

Judged from the backlash on her decision, the President appears to have lost quite a lot of votes from the anti-death penalty constituency, which is not inconsiderable, although it might also have stanch the flow of campaign funds to her rivals whose hard-line approach on crime feeds their clamor for retribution, although the execution of those convicted does not clearly ensure their security from the kidnap gangs.

The sociology of the debate over the most effective approach to the plague of kidnap gangs is that the clamor for execution comes mainly from the wealthy class, whose members are the victims of the abductions. Among the middle and lower classes, law and order or crime problems take a different face. The middle classes, which are the constituency of the lobby against capital punishment, are more concerned about common crimes, break-ins into their homes and safety in the streets. Both the middle classes and the poor are less concerned about kidnapping for ransom. And if their votes are to be won, these classes judge the law and order problem not on the same basis as on the basis of abduction for ransom. They are more worried over drug trafficking than kidnappings.

Thus, they cannot relate to the lifting of the moratorium on execution of kidnapping victims. That's why the President's decision has relevance only to the Filipino-Chinese community, whose financial contributions are critically important to the beleaguered President whose popularity has been sagging and needs a boost from a wider constituency.

Selling marriage

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



ON A VISIT to Japan a few years after it began its economic slide, I remarked to an American priest, who'd been working in the country for some years, about the astonishing sight of elderly Japanese men sleeping in railroad stations.

"Yes, that's a recent phenomenon," he told me. "Until a few years ago, it was unthinkable for Japanese companies to lay off their employees. Japanese men and their families had come to expect almost permanent security of tenure. But with the recent lay-offs, a lot of men find themselves without any work, and thus, without any role in life."

The role of "breadwinner," it turns out, is one solely assigned to the husband, and it's a role closely linked to men's identity and sense of self-esteem. "When they can no longer perform this role," added the priest, "these men are suddenly seen as useless, and their families can be quite ruthless in throwing them out of the house."

There are similar expectations of Filipino men, though they may not be as harsh or as stringently enforced here. Still, there's the unwritten code: A real man provides for his family. And my male friends tell me they've often stayed up nights worrying about failing in this role, about dropping the ball and thereby letting their families down.

WHAT a miserable lot we've made of marriage! No wonder young adults, "singletons" as Helen Fielding calls them, dread the marital state so much. Women, despite their upbringing that had them thumbing through bridal magazines as lit-

tle girls in search of the "perfect" dress, dread the loss of freedom and autonomy that marriage represents. Men fear the shackles of commitment and the burden of providing for their wife's and children's every need, from food to shelter, from education to sex (for the wife only, I hope).

We "smug marrieds," again to use Fielding's term, can't seem to convey why we urge the state on everyone we encounter. And of course the breakdown of so many marriages, as well as the misery that so many couples go through, hardly recommend marriage to people contemplating whether it's worth taking the plunge.

How to "sell" the idea of marriage then? Should one say at least it puts an end to serial dating, to countless nights of going out with losers who expect you to put out as payment for the taxi fare and dinner? Or would security be a better argument? As a struggling writer in my 20s, I often fantasized about marrying my then boyfriend and thereby gaining access to his salary as well as my own. Marriage taught me that a union doesn't only mean a joint bank account, it also means joint responsibilities, such as suddenly having to actually buy *patis*, which one thought was always just magically present in one's mother's cupboards.

ONE reason I can cite is that marriage builds character. You actually have to learn how to live with a complete stranger, putting up with quirks of character and habit that often annoy and exasperate but which you have to accept if you want to at least recover the expenses from your wedding. Marriage teaches you patience, endurance, holding your tongue from saying too many acerbic witty comebacks, maturity. You have to admit you'll emerge from it at least a better person. And just wait till you have children!

In the end, one gets married because one wishes to build a life with the person one loves. The romance, the "*kilig*" factor, will fade with time. But one finds that in marriage love can often morph into surprising forms. As one writer said: "Marriage entails falling in love many times—always with the same person."

'Talk to me'

"TALK to me," she said in a half-whisper, her voice so soft and faint I could hardly hear it.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon and I was rushing out to meet a friend in 30 minutes. No, I did not have the time for idle conversation.

"Talk to me," she said again, this time a little louder, her tone betraying a sense of urgency.

I looked at my aunt, her shrunken body crumpled in bed, her bony hands outstretched, seemingly reaching out to me, to all of us she had cared for, who were nowhere in sight.

I looked at her and I saw a wasted woman—skin hanging loosely from her skeletal frame, gray hair in disarray, perhaps uncombed for weeks, deep lines crisscrossing her face stained with dried tears, sunken eyes without light or cheer. The traces of the strong, stubborn, brave young lady that she had been once were visible only to the eyes of memory that could see beyond seeing.

This was the same person called "Maestra" in reverential tone by simple folks in a remote barrio in Pampanga where she had taught all her life. The first professional in an obscure community of poor farmers, she was a teacher, arbitrator of family conflicts, judge, nurse, marriage counselor all rolled into one. Her parents' house, where I spent my childhood, was always filled with men and women who sat at her feet for instruction, comfort or inspiration. Or, sometimes, like those bitten by dogs, for injection. My favorites were those who brought harvests from their backyards such as jackfruit, santol, chico, atis and mangoes, ah! those delicious mangoes which I had no difficulty devouring. After some time, I looked forward to their visits and I stopped pouting whenever I was asked to serve them 'hot chocolate—a smooth mixture of ground peanuts and cacao, creamed with fresh carabao's milk. When the guests left, she would carefully wrap the green mangoes with soft cloth to hasten their ripening and to keep their skins unblemished, for me.

In the household, she was "Ms Fix it." Anything that needed repair fell under her department. She was also the family's chief security officer. She made sure no one would bring harm to any one of us.

For 40 years, she had been a mother to thousands of children. Now, she was alone.

She was my mother, too. Because Mother (her sister) was widowed when I was barely a toddler, and because my aunt had opted to remain unmarried, she gave financial support and loving care to me and my younger sister, sent us through college, guided us to build a future for ourselves and taught us to live with honor and dignity. She spanked us whenever she caught us lying or asking for a favor from anyone. She taught us to be self-reliant and to live within our resources. Her relatives thought she had money, but I thought otherwise. She always said, "There is not much money to go around. Be thrifty." With a small allowance, I had no choice but to follow her advice. However, I knew she gave us more than enough because there was never a time when I felt deprived of anything at all. My recurring dream of her was when I would cuddle up to her and she would run her fingers through my curly hair. I felt so loved and so at peace.

My aunt saw me in the future as a school principal. However, I did not share that dream. I wanted to be something else—a writer. Although, she had doubts about my choice of a degree program (AB in English), she permitted me to explore the future's wealth of promises by paying for my education. Like her, I was not sure what jobs this program would prepare me for, but somehow that was not our concern at that time. I just wanted to be happy; literature made me happy; she was happy because I was happy.

Being unmarried, she never had a child of her own. I was her daughter, born not of her womb but of her heart. But even with me, she was alone. Some time in my college years, she lost me. I became so busy building my own world, pursuing my own ambitions, constructing bridges to other human beings that I hardly noticed her. My joys were my own to savor; my wounds were my own to bind. Neither my plans nor my dreams included her.

At the sunset of her life, she suffered a stroke. Not long after, Alzheimer's set in. Needing constant medical care, she started living with us in Manila. I would peep into her room once in a while and ask her perfunctorily, at times, how she was. I would bring her a gift or some nice things to eat on some occasions. But I rarely sat down to talk to her or listen to her old stories, told over and over again.

"Talk to me," she begged. My God, how insensitive had I become! Why didn't I find the time and the heart to hold her hand and reassure her that I was still here, that we all cared for her, that she had not totally lost us? How long had she been suffering from this isolation?

Constance Supan gave us a lifetime of true caring. Now, in her senile years, she was alone.

I looked at my aunt and I saw myself in the future. When it's my time, would I be treated similarly? Would I be consigned to a corner to die alone? Would I be exiled in a world where people would be transformed into mere voices, thousands of them, but no one speaking to me?

Suddenly, a wave of pain seized me and jabbed my guts with its savagery.

I embraced my aunt, clasped her hand near my heart and poured into her gentle hand the tenderness that had been locked within me for so long, letting it flow through her fingers into her core, hoping to fill her with the forgotten joys of being loved and cherished.

I looked at my aunt. She was now smiling at me. I smiled back at her. Forgive me, forgive me, I said over and over again.

It was I who was now reaching out to her. It was I now who was lonely for her. I was the child again who sought comfort in her warm bosom.

She looked at me and asked, "Who are you? What is your name?"

It was then that I broke down. I knew I had lost her forever.

Years later, I joined the academe as a second career after my retirement from my earlier job. She had long been gone when I was appointed as a school administrator.

I see her now wrapping those sweet mangoes with soft cloth to keep their skins golden and unblemished, for me.

Edna Flor M. delos Santos, Ph.D., is a part-time professorial lecturer and full-time Dean of Studies of the FEU-FERN College at Mapayapa, Diliman, Quezon City.

GUESTING on "Oprah" recently, singer Dolly Parton related that another guest, singer Melissa Etheridge, who had just married her partner, asked her if she believed in same-sex marriages. "Sure I do," Parton drawled, "why should we straight couples be the only ones to suffer?" Married for more than 40 years herself, Parton can be said to be an authority on marriage, and surely knows how much work it takes to maintain one. Asked on that same show the secret to the durability of their union despite her very high-profile work, Parton said something that I immediately connected with: "He's a very low-key person and is happier staying in the background."

Sometimes, a marriage works because one partner realizes there's room for only one in the narrow beam of the spotlight. But the arrangement works only if the glare of attention is conceded happily, without fuss or resentment. And mainly because the low-key spouse is loathe to call attention to himself or herself in the first place. I think trouble brews when the relationship deteriorates into a competition, to see who makes more money, is better known, has the upper-hand in the relationship.

But neither would it be healthy, I think, if the marriage starts off with the parameters of power already pre-determined: one spouse (usually the husband) allocating for himself all power and perks. The usual arrangement is that, because he is the breadwinner and thus the holder of economic power, he gets to enjoy all the privileges that the "head of household" is entitled to, such as making all important decisions, from how to achieve world peace to where the grocery budget goes.

I'm often surprised, from talking to men friends, how much of a burden "power" in this context can be. True, some men covet power in their family as their only compensation for feelings of powerlessness at work and in the world at large. But many men also feel intimidated by expectations of being SOLELY responsible for the welfare of the family, and when they fail at this, their entire sense of self is shattered, bereft of what they and society have come to see as their main role in life.

'Lost and found' old accounts

TOWARD the end of each year, we clean our cabinets and bodega, disposing of unused and unwanted things to make space for more junk the coming year. This annual activity can be rather pleasant if not for the allergy attack that comes when we move about dust that had remained untended for a year. The bonus is that "lost" articles turn up and sometimes even things that you did not even know or imagine you had in the first place.

This year I was all alone doing the "spring cleaning" as my sister had cleared much of the junk in the house following the death of our mother early this year. While sorting, cleaning and clearing my mother's effects, she did the same for her things. In the process we got to know many facets of our mother that we never knew before—that she kept an axe and bolo in her bedside table perhaps to keep our father from philandering, there were thankful letters from young men she sent to seminaries, perfumed fans and boxes of photographs documenting a life of 70 long years.

To spare my sisters the same task (and perhaps get rid of some embarrassing personal effects), spring cleaning this year was more thorough than before. One of the pleasant surprises that turned up was "To the Islands Far Away: The Story of the Thomasites and Their Journey to the Philippines." I remember leafing through the sepia photographs in this illustrated pamphlet published by the Public Affairs Section, US Embassy but only now read the text that commemorated the August 1901 arrival of American teachers known to history as the Thomasites. I knew they came aboard the US Transport SS Thomas but did not know there was a first group of 48 teachers that arrived on board the SS Sheridan in July 1901. The next batch of 540 teachers (mostly male) arrived on the SS Thomas in August 1901. It was a rather long trip by our standards today, the Thomasites sailed from San Francisco, July 23, 1901 and arrived in Manila, Aug. 21, 1901. Natu-

LOOKING
BACKAmbeth R.
Ocampo

rally, I was drawn to the food, a sample menu of which is as follows:

"Breakfast: stewed prunes, corn meal mush, cod fish cakes, broiled rump steak and mushroom sauce, mutton chops, fried liver and bacon, parsley omelet, sautéed potatoes, hot rolls, buns, currant jelly, tea, coffee and cocoa. Lunch consisted of: bean salad, onion soup, Frankfurt sausage and sauerkraut, veal and ham pie, baked sweet and mashed potatoes, cold roast and corned beef, mutton, Bologna sausage. Desert: bread and butter pudding, stewed peaches, pastry. Edam cheese, crackers, tea and coffee. Dinner: Pickled red cabbage, gherkins, soupe a la Reine, salt salmon bellies, egg sauce, potatoes, stewed tripe and onions, roast pork and apple sauce, chicken sauté, roast fillet of beef and roast brown potatoes, parsnips in cream, macedoine of vegetables. Dessert: college pudding and sweet sauce, apple pie, orange jelly, canned nectarines, cheese and crackers, tea, coffee, cocoa."

They were fed very well on board the ship and probably made it difficult for some to adjust to the Philippine climate and food. Aside from this, there must have been the boredom of the long journey. Charles S. Banks left us with "Scientific Notes" actually the observations of what was seen on sea (whales, fish, birds, dolphins, etc.) and what was seen and endured on board:

"Aboard ship, aside from the two cats and the three dogs, the animal life was limited to three insects. The ever present house fly, *Musca domestica*, whose persistent alighting upon one's nose in

the early morn, aroused him from his peaceful and dreamy slumbers only to make him wish the pesky fly miles away. The fly was certainly much absent from the mess table and I opined that his equal scarcity on deck was due largely to a feeling that if he would have safe passage to the Orient he must not venture where a stray gust of wind might blow him to sea.

"The German cockroach, *erstwhile* the croton bug, *Ectobia germanica*, may be said to be in full possession of the ship, above master and crew, above the scruples of the passengers, above the vigil of the Chief Steward and his assistants, and above the vicissitudes of climate. His is the privilege of walking abroad at noonday among the stores, the fruits, the candles and wheresoever her lisheth. Even the office of the Quartermaster is not sacred from the intrusion of this little pest, for he will frequently be seen walking over written pages upon the desk, stopping occasionally and moving his antennae in a way to suggest the wise and appreciative interest he takes in the literary efforts of man.

"One of the most insidious and annoying of the insect travelers is the flea, *Pulex irritans*, the significance of whose name is perfectly obvious. The favorite place of attack of his fleaship is around the ankles of those wearing low shoes and the fact of his elusiveness when attempts are made to capture him, makes him the cause of uneasiness to many who otherwise might have ended their voyage without a single pang of discomfort, seasickness, not excepted."

All this and other impressions were published in a now rare and out-of-print book "The Log of the Thomas" which is more than a ship's log, it gives us a glimpse into the lives of the early American teachers who came to the Philippines at the turn of the century and made us rightly or wrongly their little brown brothers.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

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TV show's sorry portrayal of women

WE wish to comment on the TV program "Sex and the City."

We are aware that the show is not only rating high among American audiences, but it is fast gaining popularity among local audiences as well.

We credit the show's producers, first of all, for presenting professional women as intelligent beings with high career goals. Working Filipinas—especially those in the corporate world—could surely learn from the work values of this show's main characters.

However, we wish to raise another point. We are not in favor, sad to say, of the producers presenting women as mere "sluts" with shallow whims and caprices.

Slow action on DENR complaint

IF it is not inefficiency of Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials Jeremias Dolino, OIC, Office of the Undersecretary, and Danilo M. Coronacion, administrator, Philippine Coconut Authority, I don't know what is. I had lodged a complaint with Marcelino Austria, OIC, Provincial Office, Calapan, Mindoro, about the barangay chair of Bongabon, Mindoro who had some coconut trees chopped down in our land, in Ibayo, Bongabon, Mindoro Oriental.

So far, the only result I have received for my efforts are "endorsements" from the OIC, Office of the Undersecretary for Field Operations. The endorsement was forwarded to the office of Coronacion.

My letter-complaint was dated Aug. 18, 2003. The first endorsement was dated Sept. 3. Do I have to wait till kingdom come to get results from the above-mentioned offices?

—LIWAYWAY N. YLAGAN,
6179 Einthoven St.,
Palanan, Makati City

Such mentality, we feel, should not be inculcated in our Filipino culture.

"Sex and the City's" producers—and many others in Hollywood—have failed to present one thing: that sex is only for married couples.

It is sad to see how these days, premarital sex is rampant in our society. This is obviously due to the proliferation of films/TV shows depicting perverted sex. Thus, many young couples have been wrongly influenced by distorted views on sex and marriage.

As single professional women, we still believe in a clean man-woman relationship in the courtship stage and the oneness of a couple in marriage. We hope that

Taken out of context

PLEASE let me set some facts straight about the INQUIRER article last Nov. 22 titled, "Noli is his own man—Recto."

It is sad that the interview with your reporter regarding my views on Senators Loren Legarda and Noli de Castro were taken out of context. I did not say, during the interview, that Legarda is under the control of the Lopezes.

What I pointed out was that President Macapagal-Arroyo is exploiting the financial problems of the Lopezes to get them to support De Castro as her vice-presidential candidate and to convince Legarda not to run under the opposition with Fernando Poe Jr.

Ms Macapagal wants to ride on the popularity of De Castro whom she sees as her ticket to victory in the presidential election in May 2004.

We in Bayan Muna firmly acknowledge Legarda's good performance in the Senate. She has supported Bayan Muna's positions on varied issues like human rights, peace and national sovereignty. Her nationalist stance in fact, makes her a good choice even for higher public office.

our fellow single Filipinas will think likewise.

—MICHE GEPE,
19 Pat Senador St., San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City; TERESA MANCIA,
Antel 2000, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City; BENG MARINAY, 14C Belvedere Tower Condominium, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Regarding De Castro, I respect his statement that he makes his own decisions based on his assessment of what he can or cannot do. He has shown independence on issues. We hope he will not allow himself to be used in the President's overweening ambition to retain the presidency in 2004.

—RER SATUR C. OCAMPO,
Room 616, South Wing,
House of Representatives,
Batasan Complex, Quezon City

This is in response to the letter of Rep. Satur Ocampo.

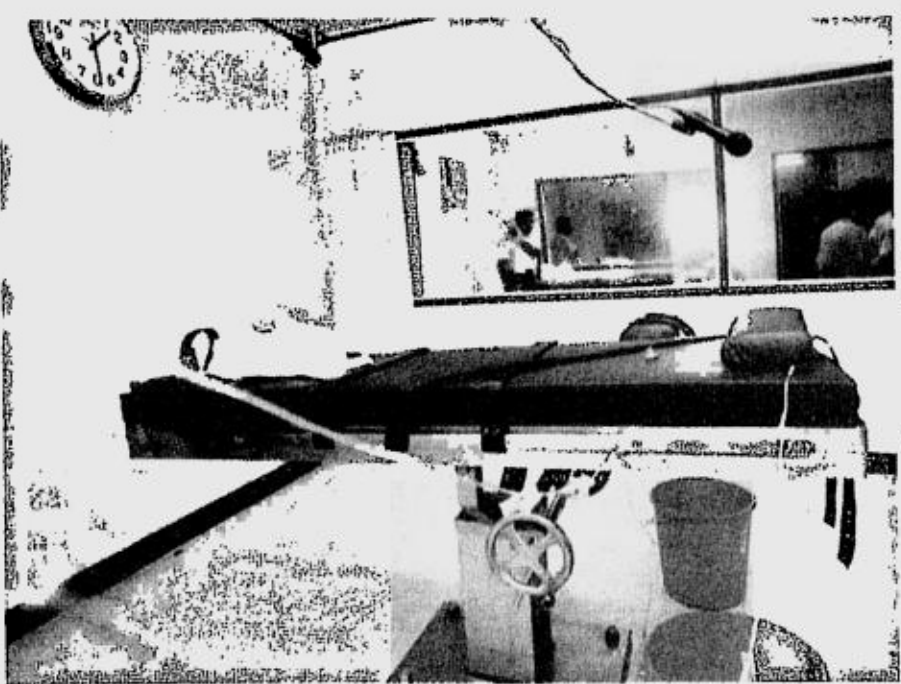
The story was accurate. Ocampo was quoted accurately. He does not refute having been quoted about the rise of the "new Lopez oligarchy" with Senators Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda, whom he described as "creations of TV hype," filling in the shoes of the late Vice President Fernando Lopez as "political surrogates" of the Lopezes.

Ocampo does not allege that the quotes were manufactured nor complain that the story was spun out of thin air.

—CARLITO PABLO, PDI reporter

inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.



Deterrent to kidnapping

IN THE UNITED States during the 1920s, there were many kidnap-for-ransom cases culminating in the kidnapping and killing of the son of the national hero, Charles Lindbergh. The perpetrator was caught, tried and executed in the electric chair, at the New Jersey state prison.

Kidnap-for-ransom cases took a "nose-dive" and criminals looked elsewhere,

since a new law called the Lindbergh Law was enacted, requiring the death penalty for conviction of the crime of kidnapping.

Wouldn't this solution to the increasing rate of kidnap crimes here in the Philippines be a serious deterrent?

—NORMAN PESKIN,
PO. Box 444,
Greenhills, Metro Manila 1502

A vote for Yadao

"FOR being late for trial, you are hereby fined P2,000." The lawyer, Efigenio S. Damasco, frankly and boldly said: "I cannot afford it, your honor. My appearance fee is only P500." Damasco was fined P200, and he continued to prosecute the accused in his capacity as private prosecutor. The presiding judge was Maria Theresa Yadao.

In my retirement at 76, after 46 years of practice, that was the first time I have seen how a judge dispenses justice in the case of the lawyer acting as private prosecutor in a car theft case. I never followed up what happened to the accused.

Yadao's decision in the Panfilo Lacson case shows the caliber of this judge who

could withstand the terrific pressure she must have been undergoing, most especially from an administration intent on preventing Lacson from running as president.

I wish I can say the same for Jovencito Zuño, who is said to be recommended to be the next justice secretary, but who is the picture of a fiscal with prosecution complex. From the decision of Yadao, there was not sufficient evidence to warrant the issuance of an order for the arrest of Lacson and his co-accused. Zuño should abide by it and tackle other cases pending before the justice secretary.

—BENJAMIN S. MANAS,
Barangay Nueva,
San Pedro, Laguna

No apologies for Three Tenors needed

I READ the column of Neal Cruz that dripped with venom last Nov. 17 with great pain and sadness.

I can understand that the Three Tenors (Interior Secretary Joey Lina, presidential adviser Angelo Reyes and Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando), the Spice Boys and the rest may not be favorite government officials or amateur singers, but the harsh judgment on their performance at a charity benefit borders on meanness and pettiness so unbecoming of a columnist of his stature.

As producer of "Salute 21," I witnessed how they worked so hard to put up a musical for the benefit of soldiers killed or wounded in battle. As Alay sa Kawal Foundation president Ramon Pedrosa said in his brief remarks before the show, some 3,700 soldiers have died since 1986 so that we can live in peace.

True, some of our "stars" may have sang off tune at times, forgotten their lyrics perhaps, or even looked as "pa-show biz," but it was all in good fun and for two worthy causes.

You see, the government cannot sufficiently provide for the needs of the families left behind by the dead soldiers, nor can it compensate the maimed and the wounded adequately.

The Alay sa Kawal Foundation was put up precisely to supplement the government's efforts in setting up livelihood and educational programs for the soldiers' dependents. Officers and enlisted men with potentials for higher education are also provided with scholarship assistance through the other beneficiary of "Salute 21"—the Sapiens Militus (soldier-scholar) Scholarship Foundation program.

Could we have raised funds some other way? Perhaps. Of course, but it would have been much harder and slower. A concert, gathering all the friends and families of the "stars," was faster.

As producer, I had limitations to what I could do that no other producer would have wanted to bear—no selling tickets and sponsorship to agencies under the "stars" direct supervision. No bureau director was coerced to purchase tickets or table sponsorships.

If this was so, then businessmen and officials in the "captive audience" who only bought tickets because their arms were twisted, could have then opted not to attend and we would have played to a half-empty hall.

As it is, we enjoyed a "full-house" and the audience was singing along and clapping heartily—even at the expense of the "stars." They hardly behaved like a "captive audience" because they came prepared for a night of music and fun and they got it.

And no, I beg to disagree with Cruz. The country is not burning down or falling apart. I realize that it may be easier for columnists like him to paint doomsday scenarios than write on the "positives" happening in our country. But we ordinary citizens are committed to doing our bit for our beloved Philippines. It is the only country we have.

The team that put up the concert did not take anything from taxpayers' coffers. Rather, the concert supplemented the meager resources of the government for the needs of the men and women in uniform. We practiced after office hours, used private funds, homes and talents to rehearse and put together a show we feel we don't need to apologize for.

—BETH SISON-TAGLE
producer, "Salute 21
Concert-for-a-Cause,"
82 Katipunan Ave.,
White Plains, QC



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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Cotabato auto dealer kidnapped

COTABATO CITY—Unidentified gunmen who posed as customers during a noontime deal here on Monday abducted a 24-year-old Filipino-Chinese dealer of second-hand vehicles, police and military sources said yesterday.

The kidnapping occurred as the government took several measures, including setting up checkpoints in Metro Manila, to clamp down on kidnapping syndicates that have been prying on wealthy businessmen, particularly those of Chinese descent.

Supt. Dipunod Maruhom said Norman Sia had gone to the ARMM Compound around 11 a.m. to meet with prospective car buyers but has since failed to come home.

Maruhom said an unidentified man earlier called up Sia, who agreed to meet them to finalize the deal.

It was Sia's fiancée, a certain Analyn, who alerted authorities and the Sia family of Norman's disappearance around 4 p.m. also on Monday.

Maruhom said Sia could have been abducted at the time the suspects were driving the car on a "road test" toward Maguindanao, a precondition for the transaction.

At around 9 p.m. on Monday, police authorities reported the recovery of Sia's KIA car with license plate LEW 969 in front of the Fit-mart Shopping Mall.

Chief Insp. Raul Supiter, head of the Tacurong City police force, said the car had been abandoned.

He said Sia had not been found.

"Our problem right now is that we can't locate the whereabouts of the victim," Supiter added.

The Sia family said as of yesterday, they did not receive any word about their relative's fate.

The police said they were not discounting the involvement of the Pentagon kidnapping gang.

But Senior Supt. Isnaji Bantala, police director for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the abduction could be the work of groups trying to raise funds for the 2004 elections.

He did not elaborate but said this was one of the angles the police were looking at.

Checkpoints have been set up in selected areas in Metro Manila and roads leading to the metropolis. *Charlie Señase, Edwin Fernandez and Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

19 cargo ship crewmen rescued near Boracay

CEBU CITY—Nineteen crew members were rescued after their cargo vessel sank in waters off Boracay Island, Aklan on Monday dawn.

Cebu Coast Guard Commander Elson Hermogino said six officials and 13 crew members of the LCT Doña Trinidad were saved by elements of the Caticlan Coast Guard Station in Aklan and a team of the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Boracay.

Four were brought to the Kalibo Provincial Hospital while the rest were confined at the Boracay Hospital.

The cargo vessel, which was carrying about 800 tons of cement, left the port of the Apo Cement Corp. (Apocemco) in Naga town, Cebu last Saturday.

It was supposed to arrive in Roxas, Mindoro Occidental on Monday morning.

But the vessel encountered strong waves near Boracay. Two of its engines did not function anymore after the waters sipped through its engine room.

It then sank at about 2 a.m. on Monday, about 250 meters away from the shoreline of Sitio Bulabog, Barangay Balabag, Boracay.

In an interview over radio station dyLA, Caticlan Coast Guard Station Commander Edgardo Ybanez said they received a distress call from radio operator Rodolfo Marcelo of the LCT Doña Trinidad past midnight of Monday but it was suddenly cut.

He said that when they failed to establish contact with the crew members of the cargo vessel, he immediately instructed his men to conduct a search and rescue operation.

Most of the survivors were wearing their life jackets and life rafts when they were rescued by members of the Coast Guard.

Some were already on the shoreline when the rubber boat of the Caticlan Coast Guard Station arrived. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Guingona says he's likely to retire

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Like many of his predecessors, Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. also dreamt of leading his country one day, in a fashion he sees fit. But the option to retire from government service next year seems to be just the more logical thing for him to do.

Speaking before members of Iloilo media at Day's Hotel on Saturday, Guingona, whose privilege speech "I Accuse" while still in the Senate signaled the downfall of the Estrada administration three years ago, said that even if more groups of various persuasions would come out and offer him help, he no longer has ample time to prepare for a national campaign.

"There is a very limited time left. The last day of filing will be on Jan. 2. Holiday pa. Daw indi na pwede (It looks like it no longer possible anymore)," said Guingona, who traces his roots in Guimaras.

Guingona announced that he's not running for any position next year during the launching of the Bangon! Movement in Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila last Nov. 20.

"I decided not to run because of many circumstances. One of them is, I do not have the logistics. *Kulang iya sa bala*. But more than that, I decided to serve the people in another capacity," he told reporters.

ROUNDUP

Cook hurt in blast

BAGUIO CITY—A cook was hurt after a bomb exploded and started a fire in a restaurant at the central business district here on Saturday morning. Police reports said an unidentified suspect dropped a Molotov bomb through the slightly open door of the Rito's Steak and Restaurant here at about 12:15 a.m. Saturday but the bomb did not explode. When the suspect returned, cook Alfredo Magpatoc saw him and tried to grab another Molotov bomb that the suspect was holding. The bomb exploded and started a fire when the suspect dropped it during the struggle. Magpatoc, who suffered from slight burns, extinguished the fire immediately. Police said the suspect escaped. *Rod Bansag, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Mayor's house shot

SUBIC, Zambales—Armed men fired at the house of Mayor Jeffrey Khonghun on Tuesday dawn, police reports said. No one was hurt in the attack but it damaged the door of Khonghun's office in his compound along the national highway in Barangay Aningway-Sacatihan here, police said. Investigators found at least 22 bullet holes on a wall and the compound's concrete fence. Security guard Jimmy Ariel, 45, who was manning Khonghun's house during the attack at about 2 a.m., said the suspects fled toward Olongapo City. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Eco-tourism award

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Tourism awarded Donsol town in Sorsogon the "best eco-tourism product" because of the existence of whale sharks in the town at the Philippine International Convention Center. Donsol Mayor Jerome Alcantara said that because of the whale sharks, at least 250 mostly fishing families were given jobs through selling of simple souvenirs made out of sea products. DOT regional director Maria Ong Ravanilla said that for so many years, the Bicol region, especially Donsol, was once a sleepy place that now bagged the award.

Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Japanese for deportation

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo on Friday ordered the deportation of a Japanese wanted for fraud in his country. Hideo Kamata, 58, was arrested on Dec. 4 in Barangay San Jose in Guagua, Pampanga, a copy of the order showed. He was also included in the Bureau of Immigration's blacklist. According to a charge sheet, Kamata has an outstanding arrest warrant issued by Judge Takayoshi Inoue of the Chiba summary court. The National Police Agency of Japan requested his arrest. Between November 2001 and June 2002, Kamata reportedly defrauded a 47-year-old Japanese of 18.4 million yen, supposedly for an investment in the auction or export of vehicles.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Organic fertilizer

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando distributed 210 bags of high-grade organic fertilizer processed from Metro Manila's garbage to Benguet farmers. Fernando also signed a memorandum of agreement with Benguet not only to supply organic fertilizer to vegetable farmers at a subsidized price but also to transfer technology on solid waste management. "This is Filipino technology perfected by MMDA using market scraps," Fernando said. MMDA is producing five tons of organic fertilizer, which he admitted is a minuscule amount of what the agency can produce.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Design competition

COTABATO CITY—The Department of Tourism in Central Mindanao had chosen designer Virgilio "Barge" Ramos to do justice to Central Mindanao's colorful *malong* and ethnic fabrics during a nationwide fashion design competition in Manila on Dec. 20. Sohura Dimaampao, DOT director, said Ramos would compete with at least 18 other designers.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau.

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Promulgated:
8 December 2003

RESOLUTION NO. 6446

The Commission on Elections, by virtue of the power vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, and other election laws, **RESOLVED** to promulgate as it hereby promulgates, the following rules and regulations to enforce the prohibited acts under Section 261, paragraphs (p), (q), (r), (s), (t) and (u) of the Omnibus Election Code and Sections 32 and 33 of Republic Act No. 7166, in connection with the May 10, 2004 synchronized national and local elections.

SECTION 1. Declaration of policy. - It is the policy of the Commission on Elections (Commission) to prohibit during the election period the bearing, carrying and transporting of firearms or deadly weapons by any person, and not to allow the employment of security personnel or bodyguards, and organization and maintenance of reaction forces.

SECTION 2. Prohibitions. - During the election period from December 15, 2003 to June 9, 2004 it shall be unlawful for:

- Any person, including those possessing a permit to carry firearms outside of residence or place of business, to bear, carry or transport firearms or other deadly weapons in public places including any building, street, park, private vehicle or public conveyance. For the purpose "firearm" includes airgun, while "deadly weapons" include hand grenades or other explosives, except pyrotechnics;
- Any member or officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police or any other law enforcement agency of the government, to bear firearms outside of their respective barracks, garrisons, camps, offices or such other military or police installations;
- Any candidate for public office, including incumbent officials seeking election to any public office or any other person, to employ, avail himself of or engage the services of security personnel or bodyguards, whether or not such bodyguards are members or officers of the PNP, the AFP or any other law enforcement agency of the government;
- Any person to act as security personnel or bodyguard of any candidate or to authorize or order such assignment;
- Any member of security or police organization of government agencies, commissions, councils, bureaus, offices or government-owned or controlled corporations or privately-owned or operated security, investigative, protective or intelligence agencies, to bear firearms outside the immediate vicinity of his place of work; and
- Any person to organize or maintain reaction forces, strikes forces or similar forces.

SECTION 3. Exceptions. - The prohibitions in Section 2 hereof shall not apply to the following:

- Officers or members of the AFP, PNP, or any law enforcement agency constituting the normal security personnel complement of the incumbent President, Vice President, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Secretary of National Defense, Secretary of Interior and Local Government, Chairman and Commissioners of the Commission on Elections, Chief of Staff of the AFP and AFP Major Service Commanders, Director General of the PNP and senior officers thereof while in actual performance of their duties;

Senior officers shall include battalion commanders, group commanders, regimental commanders, brigade commanders, division commanders, and their equivalents in the Navy and Air Force, Specified Command and AFP-wide Service Support Units, and those higher in the hierarchy of the AFP including all active generals; and Provincial Directors, District Directors designated in the NCR, Regional Directors, and Directors of Intelligence operations and administrative units and other Directors, Deputy Director Generals, and Director General within the General Headquarters- PNP;

- Regular officers or members of the AFP/ PNP and other law enforcement agencies of the government, except those who are under suspension and those against whom administrative or criminal charges have been filed, provided that when in the possession of firearms the law enforcement officer must be: (1) in full uniform showing clearly and legibly his name, rank and serial number which shall remain visible at all times; (2) in the actual performance of duty in the specific area designated in the mission order approved by the Commanding General or officer of the unit; and (3) going to or returning from residence/barracks/official stations;
- Cashiers and disbursing officers while in the performance of their duties if authorized in writing by the Commission specifically when said persons transport or disburse payrolls or deposit or carry large sums of money or other valuables amounting to not less than one hundred thousand pesos;
- Members of duly authorized security or police organizations of government agencies, commissions, councils, bureaus, offices or government-owned or controlled corporations in the actual performance in

the specific area of their assignment of their duties with prior written authority from the Commission; provided that when in the possession of firearms the law enforcement officer must be: (1) in full uniform showing clearly and legibly his name, rank and serial number which shall remain visible at all times; (2) in the actual performance of duty in the specific area designated in the mission order approved by the authorized officer thereof; and

- Members of duly authorized security of private owned or operated security, investigative, protective or intelligence agencies in the actual performance in the specific area of their assignment, of their duties with prior written authority from the Commission.

The exemption also applies to these personnel when:

- Pursuing a person committing or has just committed a crime in the premises being guarded;
 - Actually escorting or providing security for the transport of payrolls, deposits or other valuables with prior written authority from the Commission;
 - Guarding private residence, buildings or offices, with prior written authority of the Commission; and
 - Escorting prisoners with respect to guards of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and provincial or city jails to and from prosecution offices, tribunals or courts in compliance with subpoena issued for the purpose, and with prior written authority of the Commission. For this purpose, the Regional Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel constituted under Section 5 hereof shall act on all requests by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology within their area of jurisdiction.
- (f) Members of the AFP and PNP:
- When the President of the Philippines shall have given previous authority therefor, in the interest of preserving law and order, and the Commission notified thereof in writing;
 - When authorized by the Commission, which shall issue the permit only if it is necessary for the maintenance of a free, orderly and honest elections.
 - Other military or police personnel, including members of the AFP and PNP intelligence units, such as the ISAFP and the AFPWSSU, whose true names, rank and serial numbers are registered with the Commission.
 - Regular agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and NICA when conducting legitimate official operations or missions with prior written specific authority of the Commission.
 - Members of the PNP, AFP or other law enforcement agencies of the government authorized to act as bodyguards of candidates subject to the conditions provided for herein.
 - Security pertaining to accredited members of the diplomatic and consular personnel and establishments as governed by international law, provided that an official list of the security personnel for the diplomatic officers and establishments be furnished the Committee.
 - Director III and IV of the Commission on Elections; and
 - All members of the Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel constituted under Section 5 hereof.

The exemption extended to members of the AFP, PNP and other government personnel shall be limited to government issued firearm(s) in their name and covered by the proper Memorandum Receipts or other official documentations for the purpose.

SECTION 4. Suspension of permits to carry firearms and issuance of mission orders and memorandum receipts. - During the election period, the sole authority to issue permits to carry firearms outside residence or place of business shall be vested in the Commission. For this purpose.

- Any Permit to Carry Firearms Outside Residence (PTCFOR), Mission Orders (MO), and Memorandum Receipts (MR), issued prior to the effectivity of this Resolution and covered by the prohibition are hereby declared suspended and without force and effect. However, the Chief, Philippine National Police or his duly authorized representative may process and issue Permits to Carry Firearms Outside Residence or Place of Residence (PTCFOR). The PTCFOR issued during this period shall not be valid without prior written authority from the Commission. Mission Orders to act as security or bodyguards of any candidate issued prior to the effectivity of this Resolution are also hereby declared suspended and without force and effect.
- During the election period, all authority to issue MO and MR to civilians pursuant to Sections 4 and 5 of the Rules and Regulations Implementing P.D. 1866 dated June 29, 1983 (Codifying the law on illegal/unlawful Possession of Firearms) are hereby suspended.
- The PNP is hereby directed to submit to the Commission a complete list of all PTCFOR or similar authorization issued to civilians and members of authorized security agencies within fifteen (15) days from the effectivity hereof. Within the same period, the AFP and the Department of National Defense shall submit a complete list of all MR and MO or similar authorization issued to civilians. Likewise, within the same period, the NBI shall submit a complete list of MR and MO or similar authorization issued to its regular agents.

However, the Director General, Philippine National Police, through the Chief, Firearms and Explosives Division, may continue to process and approve licenses for possession of firearms. The firearm shall be kept in deposit with Firearms and Explosives Division unless its delivery to the licensee is authorized in writing by the Commission.

SECTION 5. Committee on firearms and security personnel. - There is hereby constituted a Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel (Committee) composed of the Chairman of the Commission, who shall be the Chairman, one Commissioner as the Vice-Chairman; one (1) representative from the PNP; one (1) representative from the AFP; and the Director IV of the Law Department of the Commission, as members, which shall determine whether or not an applicant for authority to carry, bear or transport firearms, or for the employment of security personnel falls within the exception as provided for herein.

There is also hereby constituted a Regional Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel composed of the Regional Election Director, as Chairman, the Assistant Regional Election Director as Vice-Chairman and

the PNP Regional Director as Member. The Regional Committee shall act only on requests for exemption of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology with respect to their guards escorting prisoner pursuant to a lawful order.

SECTION 6. Procedure of exemption. - Person/s enumerated under Section 3 hereof seeking (a) authority to carry firearms outside his residence or place of business under Section 261 (q) of the Omnibus Election Code; or (b) exemption from the prohibition on bearing, carrying or transporting firearms under Section 32 of Republic Act No. 7166, shall file with the Committee a written request for exemption in three (3) copies, stating his full name and exact place of residence and/or business, official receipt number of payment of firearm tax, a brief justification for such application, including documents to support the same, and such other data as may be required by the Commission.

The Committee shall process the application in accordance with the policies herein set forth. After processing the application, the Committee shall either deny or approve the application. If approved, the Committee shall issue a written authority in three (3) copies, to be distributed as follows: the original, to the applicant; the second copy, to the Law Department; and the third copy, to be retained by the Committee.

Requests of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology shall be filed with the Regional Committee concerned. The Permit issued by the Regional Committee shall be valid until revoked by the Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel. It shall make a bi-monthly periodic report to the Committee on Firearms and Security Personnel.

The decision of the Committee is appealable to the Commission En Banc, whose decision shall be final.

SECTION 7. Application for security personnel or bodyguard. - Under the same procedure prescribed in the immediate preceding section, when circumstances so warrant, including but not limited to threats to life and security of a candidate, the Committee may authorize the Chief of Staff Armed Forces of the Philippines or Director General, Philippine National Police to assign not more than two (2) regular members of the AFP or PNP, save in exceptionally meritorious circumstances, where not more than five (5) regular members of the military or police may be assigned as such security, or the NBI Director to assign one (1) or more regular agents of said agency, who shall provide him security, subject to such conditions and restrictions that the Committee may impose. If at any time the ground for which the authority to engage the services of security personnel has been granted shall cease to exist, or for any valid cause, the Commission shall revoke the authority granted.

In processing applications, the Committee shall take into consideration reports from the AFP and PNP, as well as reports from Comelec officials or any community organization on the insurgency situation of the area and similar peace and order circumstances.

SECTION 8. Confiscation of Firearms. - During the election period, the Commission may order deputized units of the PNP or when necessary, the AFP, to effect the confiscation of firearms of any member of the AFP, police force, home defense forces and all other para-military units that now exist or which may hereafter be organized, or any member or members of security or police organization, government departments, commissions, councils, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities, or government-owned or -controlled corporations and other subsidiaries or any member of privately-owned or -operated security, investigative, protective or intelligence agencies performing identical or similar functions and disarm all such persons who do not possess the necessary authorization from the Commission to carry, possess or transport firearms.

SECTION 9. Prohibited organization or maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces, or other similar forces. - During the election period, it shall be unlawful for any person to organize or maintain any reaction force, strike force, civilian security force or similar force. Any of said forces, which is now existing is hereby ordered disbanded immediately. All the members thereof shall return immediately their firearms, insignias, or uniforms, to the proper office or officer issuing them.

Effective immediately, but not beyond December 10, 2003, the heads of all such reaction forces, strike forces or similar forces shall submit to the Commission, through the Regional Election Directors concerned, in three (3) legible copies, a complete list of all members thereof, stating their full names, exact address, ranks, appointment papers or designations and nature and extent of their functions. The Regional Election Directors shall, not later than December 15, 2003, forward to the Commission copies of said lists, retaining a copy thereof.

SECTION 10. Monthly reports. - For purposes of effectively enforcing the foregoing prohibitions, the PNP and AFP through the Director General and Chief of Staff, respectively, shall submit to the Commission monthly reports beginning December 31, 2003 and every month thereafter during the election period, covering the following:

- Current status of the enforcement (i.e. number of arrests, number of confiscated firearms, etc.) of the prohibition on the unauthorized carrying, bearing and transporting of firearms; and
- The peace and order situation in various parts of the country, including insurgency, the existence and size of private armies, the intensity of political rivalries and other circumstances, that may affect the conduct of the elections.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. - This resolution shall take effect after seven days from its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SECTION 12. Dissemination. - The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation and give the same the widest dissemination possible. The Executive Director shall furnish copies of this resolution to the Secretary of the Department of National Defense, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Justice, the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Director-General of the Philippine National Police and the Director of the National Bureau of Investigation.

SO ORDERED.

Benjamin S. Abalos
BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

Luzviminda G. Tancangco
LUZVIMINDA G. TANCANGCO
Commissioner

Rufino S.B. Javier
RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

Ralph C. Lantion
RALPH C. LANTION
Commissioner

Mehdi K. Sadain
MEHDI K. SADAIN
Commissioner

Resurreccion Z. Borra
RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

Florentino A. Tuason, Jr.
FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

2 cops awarded medals for repulsing NPA rebs

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The two policemen who repulsed the attack of New People's Army rebels on a station in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija on Nov. 30 received medals for bravery on Monday.

SPO3 Nestor Magtibay and SPO1 Daniel Donato were also hailed as "heroes" during flag raising rites in this regional police headquarters.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police director, awarded the medals to Magtibay and Donato.

Senior Supt. Luisito Palmera, Nueva Ecija police director, said Magtibay and Donato defended the precinct in Barangay San Rosario Young and maintained fire until police and Army rein-

forcements came. Only Magtibay and Donato were manning the station when the rebels attacked at 6:45 p.m.

According to Palmera, the two, armed with M-16 rifles, kept firing from behind a concrete wall of the station's toilet.

Magtibay was wounded in the arm. Palmera said two rebels were killed while five others were wounded in the five-minute clash.

The NPA's guerrilla front in Capas, Tarlac, said to be the unit behind the attack, had not confirmed or denied the police's claim.

Reports said at least 30 NPA rebels, wearing Army fatigues, attacked the station. **Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk**

MIXED REACTIONS

Lapid son candidacy stirs debate

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The decision of the Lakas-CMD to field Mark Lapid, the son of Gov. Manuel Lapid, as its official candidate for governor in Pampanga drew varied reactions.

Two business leaders preferred other candidates than the 24-year-old Mark.

Levy Laus, president of the Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the province needed "someone who has the experience, maturity and good track record in governance."

Laus said Mark "could still be too young as governor."

"He (Mark) is an amiable young man but the post may be too big for him to handle effectively," Laus said.

Rene Romero, private sector representative in the Regional Development Council in Central Luzon, said he believed "it is not yet the time for Mark."

Mark represented the province's youth sector in the provincial board from 1998 to 2001. In 2001, he started representing the province's Association of Barangay Captains after he was elected ABC federation president.

"The governor should be mature, dedicated, committed and can deliver the developmental needs of the province," Romero said.

Fr. Deo Galang, executive director of the Social Action Center of Pampanga, said Mark's candidacy showed the "reality that we

are facing the lowest point of Philippine politics."

Former Pampanga Rep. Emigdio Lingad said there are "better qualified leaders" than Mark.

Tootsie Herrera of the non-government health group Nutri-Linc said Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez is a better candidate for Lakas-CMD.

"Oca (Rodriguez) as governor and Mark as vice governor would have been unbeatable," she said.

Rodriguez has opted to run as mayor of the City of San Fernando.

But some residents preferred Mark to become governor, citing his relationship with Lapid.

Lapid, who entered local politics in 1995, always won by a

landslide in his three terms as governor.

Mabalacat Mayor Marino Morales, president of the Pampanga Mayors' League, said the mayors held "discussions" about Mark's candidacy before Monday's declaration of Lakas candidates in the province.

In the end, Morales said, Lakas members agreed to follow the party's decision. The elder Lapid is the provincial chair of Lakas.

"GMA needs the votes especially in her home province (Pampanga). Lito (Lapid) is expected to deliver that. The trade-off is Mark (for governor)," said a party source. **Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk**

7 dead in NPA, Army clash

DAVAO CITY—At least seven people, including a civilian, were killed during a clash on Monday between soldiers and New People's Army (NPA) rebels in a remote village of Pantukan town in Compostela Valley, the military reported yesterday.

The encounter occurred a day after soldiers also clashed with NPA rebels in South Cotabato.

Lt. Col. Agane Adriatico, military spokesperson for Southeastern Mindanao, said the encounter ensued when heavily armed communist rebels attacked a military-initiated village meeting in Sitio Lawaan in Barangay Kingking at around 3 p.m.

Aside from the civilian, two soldiers and four rebels were killed in the clash.

Adriatico said elements of the Special Operations Team (SOT) of the 58th Infantry Battalion were holding a meeting when the rebels staged the surprise attack.

He said a resident and two of the soldiers were killed instantly in the initial burst of gunfire.

Adriatico said the embattled soldiers managed to return fire and engaged the rebels in an hour-long gun battle killing four of the attackers while terrified residents, some of them dragging their children with them, ran for cover.

The NPA rebels, under Eduardo Genelsa alias Commander Lando and Eugenio Cervantes alias Commander Morgan, escaped but burned 15 houses on their way out.

The slain soldiers were initially identified as M/Sgt. Limbago and Sgt. Galaid while the civilian was identified as Andres Gardiana.

The identities of the slain rebels are still undetermined. Adriatico said because of the violence, residents of the village fled.

The villagers have sought refuge in a nearby school.

In South Cotabato, two NPA rebels were killed while three others were captured after an undetermined number of communist rebels clashed with elements of the 27th Infantry Battalion in T'boli town. **Anthony Allada with Aquiles Zonia, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

People's Initiative to Draft Davide for President

A Man of Unimpeachable Integrity

Dear Mr. Chief Justice Davide,

Our nation is at a crossroads. The choice we make today will determine the destiny of generations to come.

Our present crop of presidential aspirants offers no hope. We can expect politics as usual that will only exacerbate our path to economic decline and moral decadence.

We need a man who will rise above partisan politics. We need someone with unimpeachable integrity and proven competence. We need someone who will not only uphold the rule of law, but, more importantly, restore in the hearts of our people the fear of the law. We believe you are the man who can do this.

We, the signatories to this petition, urgently and fervently request you to run for president. We also commit to convince at least 5 people within our sphere of influence to vote for you.

We pray that you will rise to the calling of a higher office. Together, we can yet make this nation a better place for our children. By God's grace, truth, justice, and righteousness can again prevail.

Concerned Filipinos for the
Future of our Country

Too much politics. This is one of the major problems that has pulled down our nation. It breeds a system of patronage, political horse-trading, cronyism, and unprincipled compromises for political gain. With our present crop of presidential aspirants, we can expect more of the same. It is time to put a stop to this. **Tama na!. Sobra na!**

We need someone with unimpeachable integrity, proven competence and probity, and independence from vested interests. We need someone who will not compromise principles and morality for political expediency. We need someone who will not only uphold the **rule of law**, but also restore in the hearts of our people the **fear of the law**.

The recent political events have clearly shown us that one man epitomizes such qualities — Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr.

But first, we must convince him to take the challenge and respond to a higher calling.

We Need 1 Million Signatures Before Christmas!

If you would like to be counted in this petition

Send your name or a blank text message to
0927-3779888

You may also visit

www.davide4president.com

to register electronically, download signature sheets, you can also register your group

"Please clip and post this sheet at your bulletin boards and other public places."

Madame President, We Really Doubt if You Can "Win"

once you give away our skies to the Americans.

Many have already spoken on the issue of Open Skies. And it is perceived as a trade issue replete with imbalance and unfair competition, only in favor of wealthier countries with strong aviation sector.

But there is one particular concern that sharply drew our attention.

Subic and Clark, after being "liberated" from decades of American military control, has now been recaptured by the Americans illegally and, unconstitutionally, and is today "guarded" by cargo giants FedEx and UPS.

Madame President, some of **your officials like Secretary Bobby Romulo**, and possibly in tandem with globalization-fanatic Romulo Neri, are said to be **covertly working their asses to legitimize this illegal US occupation.** They will urge you to sign an "open cargo" Executive Order in the name of "developing Subic and Clark as cargo hubs," when in truth, it will merely legitimize FedEx' and UPS' illegal cargo operations in the country.

Last September, workers from various industries opposed a similar plot by the Clark Development Corporation (CDC). Its Chair Rizalino Navarro wrote the CDC proposal in a May 14 letter to you, lobbying for related executive order. Today, if these forces convince you to sign a similar EO, this will pave the way for the eventual US control of our yet-to-be-developed northern international gateway.

What good will it be for the country when one of its major industries is lorded over by giant US corporations, who will just deliver its revenues to its mother headquarters? What's there for the Filipino workers, when they will greatly be disadvantaged once these US giants decide to give jobs to their locals rather than to Filipinos?

Our 1987 Constitution is very clear in terms of regulations on foreign corporations. It categorically says what is part of our national patrimony and sovereignty that cannot be given away.

We do not believe the country will really gain economically from granting foreign control to our airways. Honestly, Mrs. President, we seriously doubt if you can win more sympathy, and more benefits for the country, by signing such an E.O.

In the dark days of fascist martial rule, we have mounted our stiffest opposition for the renewal of the US military bases, it being the icon of US political control over our country. We will not allow those pieces of land, together with its skies, be retaken by the US, this time economically.

SUBIC
CLARK
DMIA

Never Surrender Clark and Subic to US Giants FedEx and UPS!

Anthony L. Gutierrez
70's Bistro

Mercy L. Fabros
Women Health Phil.

Merick Cerezo
70's Bistro

Edina T. Almodal
TBAK

Reggie R. Frias
TBAK

Jing Porte
ZOTO / Proj. Devt.
Specialist

Romy P. Sauler
PALEA

Fleur de lys C. Cupino
Center for Positive Future

Lejun dela Cruz
Alab - Katipunan

Dolores SD. Alfante
ECPAT

Gina C. dela Cruz
Alab - Katipunan

Joel Saracho
TBAK

Jedal Pronto
Phil. Net RDI

Raldem E. Ochoco
Student Sirem Group
Youth Org.

Pangging Santos
SARILAYA

Edel Hernandez
TBAK

Edgardo Oredina
PALEA

Fidel Nemenzo
University of the Philippines

Ana Marie R. Reodique
TBAK / U-LEAD

Amy Criss
Alab - Katipunan

Viol de Guzman
FQS / U-LEAD

William Calderon
TBAK

Rafael Baretto
RPA / ABB Foundation

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Archie Buenaventura
CERD

Eden Crisostomo
Paranaque Workers Affairs Office

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Dolores SD. Alfante ECPAT	Gina C. dela Cruz Alab - Katipunan	Joel Saracho TBAK	Jedai Pronto Phil. Net RDI	Raldem E. Ochoco Student Sirem Group Youth Org.	Pangging Santos SARILAYA	Edel Hernandez TBAK	Edgardo Oredina PALEA	Fidel Nemenzo University of the Philippines
Ana Marie R. Reodique TBAK / U-LEAD	Amy Criss Alab - Katipunan	Viol de Guzman FQS / U-LEAD	William Calderon TBAK	Rafael Baretto RPA / ABB Foundation	Liza Pulgado TBAK	Flor A. Santos SANLAKAS	Archile Buenaventura CERD	Eden Crisostomo Paranaque Workers Affairs Office

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Ibanag 'versista' urges young to practice lessons of carol

By Estanislao Caldez
Tuguegarao City

AS A new generation of Ibanag and Itawes peoples in Cagayan start to sing the native carol Salamon, 84-year-old Ama Ninoy Bangayan reminds them to put the song's lessons to heart.

"Put its values into practice; don't just sing it," said Bangayan, the oldest living Salamon singer.

The Salamon, named after the biblical King Solomon, is composed of 3,000 lines of rhymed quatrains in Ibanag and sung to the accompaniment of the *cinco-cinco*, a five-stringed guitar. It is sung each night from Nov. 30 to Jan. 6, the Feast of the Epiphany.

Generations of Ibanag and Itawes peoples have been singing the Salamon for over a century now. The verses talk of the conception, birth and childhood of Jesus in Bethlehem and are composed of several episodes that teach values to the young and other members of the family.

The verses are written by old men in a 100-page notebook while following certain rituals like avoiding cursing and drawing a cross using the rooster's blood on the first page.

Older Ibanag and Itawes peoples here said



84-YEAR-OLD Ama Ninoy Bangayan urges young Ibanag and Itawes peoples to practice the values taught by the Salamon.

most Salamon writers have died and their handwritten work are getting rare.

Bangayan said the episodes of the Salamon

teach good values to the youth and family members.

On truthfulness, he said the Salamon

opens with the Holy Family in fleeing from soldiers ordered by King Herod to kill all infants, including the infant Jesus who was predicted to be the next king of the Jews.

While traveling, Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus passed by a farmer who was sowing. Mary asked the farmer, "Brother, what are you sowing?" to which the farmer replied, "Pebbles, woman, pebbles." Then Mary said, "Pebbles you sow, pebbles you reap." The next day, the farmer was surprised to see his field was ready for a harvest of pebbles.

Bangayan said the Salamon also teaches a lesson on retribution. He cited an episode where King Herod died after suffering from burning fever. Bangayan said Herod was punished for ordering the massacre of hundreds of infants.

Episodes on obedience, faith, patience, sharing and generosity also abound in the verses of the Salamon, Bangayan said.

He said Ibanags and Itawes follow the tradition of simple gift-giving and sharing with the poor every Christmas, patterned after the episode of the Three Wise Men bring gold, incense and myrrh to Jesus.

Tuguegarao Mayor Randolph Ting, through the help of the Ibanag Cultural and Arts Committee, has encouraged a new generation of singers to sing the Salamon over radio stations in the city to revive the interest of the youth on the native carol.

The politics of 'parul'

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

WITH elections less than six months away, politicians are scrambling to buy *parul* (Christmas lanterns) of various colors, designs and sizes to attract voters.

Lantern-maker Roland Quiambao, 48, said there really was such a thing as the "politics of *parul*."

In his commissioned works in Metro Manila cities, for example, some local officials strictly specify the use of colors they are identified with. The color brand of a possible opponent is discouraged, Quiambao said.

But no one among Quiambao's clients had asked him to put his or her name on his creations that are displayed on buildings of local governments or along main thoroughfares.

"I wanted to put the words 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' there," said Quiambao.

But he said he dropped the plan because it was not stipulated in the contract and the viewers might mistake it for President Macapagal-Arroyo who is his provincemate in Pampanga.

Size and design also matter.

In Southern Luzon, an official planning to run for a higher post commissioned him to make a giant lantern typical of what craftsmen in this Christmas capital produce during the annual "Ligligan Parul [Giant Lantern Festival]."

"He [the official] said he did not have money to give away. He said he would try to please his constituents through the lantern," Quiambao said.

'Dry run'

He gave that commissioned work a "dry run" on Wednesday night or a few days before the delivery date. The lantern's less than 2,000 bulbs alternately blinked, letting out flower and fan patterns in brilliant colors.

Quiambao did not install a rotor, a device unique to lantern makers in this city, and used to manipulate the light patterns in the lantern.

"I did not fit it with a rotor because nobody there knows how to operate it. Besides, the client said I should concentrate on the design so his constituents would be delighted," Quiambao said.

In place of a rotor, he attached a light sequencer. This, he noted, does not create the special effects the rotor can do.

Late orders are still coming in, he said, keeping the almost 40 families in his employ busy until a week before Dec. 25.

He said he remained loyal to the traditional design passed down by the elder craftsmen. This, he said, means ensuring that the *tambor* (inner circle), the *siku-siku* (the pointed angles of the stars), the *palimbun* (the rays) and the *punteta* (the outer circle) are always present.

"A lantern is a lantern. It's a Christmas symbol. There may be some variations to suit the client's liking," he said.

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- 15th Prize: Honda Dream 125
- 16th Prize: Honda XRM
- 17th Prize: Honda City
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- 19th Prize: Honda Wave 125
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- 94th Prize: Honda Wave 125
- 95th Prize: Honda Dream 125
- 96th Prize: Honda XRM
- 97th Prize: Honda City
- 98th Prize: Honda Wave Alpha
- 99th Prize: Honda Wave 125
- 100th Prize: Honda Dream 125

Military docs: Robot not out of danger

From page A1

the wounds he sustained in the encounter that led to his arrest last Sunday.

Robot, or Galib Andang, underwent "exploratory surgery" in the lower extremities. Because of the seriousness of the injuries, cardio-vascular, orthopedic and general surgeons, together with anesthesiologists, were called to perform the operation on Andang, Regino said.

Andang, who is in his 40s, "tolerated the procedure well" and woke up after a few minutes. By 6 a.m. yesterday, his vital signs were: 140/100 blood pressure with a cardiac rate of 78, respiratory rate of 20 and temperature of 36 Centigrade.

Regino said only after three days, when Andang's vital signs shall have stabilized, can the doctors declare if he's truly out of danger.

Echoing earlier statements by military officials, Regino said there was a high possibility that Andang's left leg would be amputated, because the blood supply at the back of the knee cap had been cut off.

Amputation possible

Regino said that Andang would be under medical observation within the next 48 to 72 hours in case "blood profusion" in his left leg would improve. After that, the doctors will decide whether to amputate his left leg.

"The chance that the left leg will be amputated is between 60 and 70 percent. There is a very high chance that the left leg would be amputated."

Regino, however, said that Andang's right leg was in a better condition, and would likely be preserved.

"The right lower extremity was repaired well. There was not much involvement of the vital structures including the vessel

and the nerve. That is why, it has a good chance of being preserved," he said.

Asked if he didn't find it ironic that the military was exhausting all means to keep Andang alive, Regino replied: "We, doctors, are following a Hippocratic oath. You know, we are just human ... and under what we call a sacred oath. Under the Geneva convention, we respect our patient; we respect our enemy."

Better alive

Military officials said Andang must be kept alive, so those who skimmed off the millions of dollars in ransom paid for the freedom of 21 victims of the Sipadan hostage crisis in 2000 could be unmasked.

"It is good to note that Galib Andang was not hit badly, and he is now alive ... At present, we are using government resources to keep him alive and prevent any further damage to his body," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military chief information officer.

He said the Armed Forces was intent on extracting information from Andang, particularly about those who took a cut of the ransom.

"Surely, we will be asking him about his knowledge about those personalities who supported him, whether they be government officials or plain civilians," Lucero said.

Lucero added that the military needed Andang alive so he could face the charges against him as well as shed light on the bandit group's operations and links to terror groups, such as the Jemaah Islamiyah, among others.

Specialized units

Lucero said the AFP has deployed "specialized units" from Camp Aguinaldo in the V. Luna Medical Center to aug-

ment the hospital security force.

"I cannot divulge the number of these personnel, but we assure the public that these additional troops will be able to protect Commander Robot from any harm and prevent him from escaping," he said.

After his capture in Indanan, Sulu, on Sunday night, Andang reportedly expressed remorse for his past deeds.

"Actually he is showing his feeling of remorse. He asked Gen. (Narciso) Abaya if he could be given a chance to redeem himself, to have a new life. However, he has to face the demands of the laws. He has to answer the charges filed against him," Lucero said.

The military has also deployed troops to conduct operations against Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khaddafy Janjalani and other bandit leaders in Sulu and Basilan based on the information shared by Andang.

"Our troops in Sulu have already initiated offensive operations, and we want to exploit the momentum that we have gained as a result of the capture of Commander Robot," Lucero said.

Dragon's view

Meanwhile, a negotiator during the Sipadan hostage-taking incident in 2000 claimed that some people had set up Andang because of the P5-million reward on his head.

"*Ipinasubo dahil sa P5 million na patong sa ulo niya* (He was set up because of the P5 million reward for his capture)," said retired Col. Ernesto "Dragon" Pacuño, also a distant relative of Andang, in a telephone interview yesterday.

Military reports said Andang's location and activities were tipped-off by a "walk-in informant" three months ago.

Pacuño, whose late wife was

a cousin of Andang's second wife, said he could not believe reports that there was an encounter that led to Andang's capture.

"Why were his bullet wounds concentrated in the legs? Why didn't Robot fight it out?" Pacuño asked. "*Kilala natin kung sino at ano kakayahang ni Robot* (We know who Robot is and what he can do)."

Other views

In Malacanang, the President's political spokesperson wasted no time using Andang's capture for campaign purposes.

Housing Secretary Michael Defensor said that while other presidential candidates were just promising to improve peace and order, President Macapagal-Arroyo was already doing it.

Defensor said Robot's capture capped Ms Macapagal's "very successful anti-crime campaign" on two fronts—anti-kidnapping and illegal drugs.

The President herself described the Abu Sayyaf yesterday as "a spent force."

"But we must mop it up completely by relentlessly going after its most incorrigible leaders, and fighting poverty in the communities that breed its recruits."

Meanwhile, the United States said it was interested in getting information from Commander Robot, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone told reporters yesterday.

"Of course, we're interested. We're all in this together; our governments work very closely together. When we apprehend someone whose information are of value to Philippine authorities ... we share it. That's the least we can do," he said. *With reports from Jerome Aning, Juliet Javellana; Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; AFP*

Libya, Germany, RP paid \$11M to Abus—Aventajado

LIBYA, Germany and the Philippines paid at least \$11 million largely in private funds to the Abu Sayyaf as ransom for the release of 11 Western hostages in 2000, a key ex-government negotiator claimed yesterday.

Former presidential adviser Roberto Aventajado, who led the negotiations, said Germany and the Philippines violated their strict no-ransom policy in a desperate bid to save the hostages, who had been kidnapped from the Malaysian diving resort of Sipadan in 2000.

President Joseph Estrada had been inclined to order a military commando rescue then, he said. But Germany, France and Finland, whose citizens were among the captives, asked Manila to refrain from using force.

"It's not really a good policy to be paying ransom and to give in to the demands of criminals. But there are other considerations involved, like in this particular case, the foreign

governments really made a very serious request to President Estrada not to attack," Aventajado told The Associated Press.

Aventajado had previously denied any ransom was paid. But his story has changed in a book, "140 Days of Terror—In the clutches of the Abu Sayyaf," that he plans to launch on Friday.

In the book he claims huge ransom payments, mostly bankrolled by Libya through a private foundation, were secretly paid.

Libyan and German officials were not immediately available for comment. Estrada, who was ousted from power in 2001, is currently under detention facing charges of massive corruption.

"I delivered it to him personally," Aventajado said of the \$11-million ransom.

"It's in dollars. People will see it in the book," Aventajado told the INQUIRER. *With reports from AP Armand Nocum, Cynthia Balana*

Victim says death ...

From page A1

18, said in the vernacular.

Andang underwent surgery late Monday because of the wounds he sustained in the encounter that led to his arrest last Sunday. If he survives the operation, Andang is likely to face the death penalty for his involvement in high-profile kidnap for ransom incidents. Andang masterminded the Sipadan hostage crisis of 2000. At least 21 people, most of them foreigners, were forcibly taken from the Malaysian diving resort and made to pay ransom amounting to millions of dollars.

Rot in jail

Mantic said if given the chance to meet President Macapagal-Arroyo again, she would ask the President to let Robot rot in jail.

"I will tell her to let Robot suffer more," she said.

But even as she was saying these

words, Mantic swore she had already forgiven the man who was responsible for her ordeal, including the death of her husband Lionel.

Worse than dead

"My life is better now. Robot is alive but he's worse than dead. He can no longer walk. It would be difficult for him to even take a leak," Mantic said.

The Montulo family, whose members Cleofe and Florida were among Mantic's companions, said Andang's capture was good news.

"We are happy to see one of the dreaded leaders of the Abu Sayyaf captured. I hope the government will get the others so that there'll be no more kidnappings in the South," Dionie Montulo told the INQUIRER by phone.

Dionie said the family, including Cleofe and Florida, would also like to see Andang languish in jail.

Ganzons sue stepma ...

From page A1

claiming the two should be held liable for Ganzon's death because they refused to give dialysis treatment to Ganzon that could have prolonged his life.

Ganzon died on Oct. 29 at the St. Paul's Hospital, where he was confined for 17 months. His attending physicians declared he died of multiple organ failure. Ganzon's children, however, claimed he died of cardio-pulmonary arrest "as a result of their refusal to administer dialysis treatment" to their father.

The complainants, all children of the former senator by his first wife Dolores, were Marigold Ganzon-Lapascua, Freeman Ganzon, Rochelle Ganzon-Mercader, Dr. Denfield Ganzon, Rodolfo Ganzon Jr., Marjorie Ganzon, Royal Ganzon, Beverly Ganzon and Rolin Ganzon.

Loving, caring

The copy of the complaint obtained by the INQUIRER did not bear the signatures of Rochelle Mercader and Rolin Ganzon.

Rona, reached for comment yesterday, said she has not received a copy of the complaint but she said she was prepared to face the charges because far from "murdering" her husband, she had loved and taken care of him for 17 months in the hospital.

"I loved my husband so much. We were married for more than 12 years," Rona said.

Rona said she could have filed dozens of cases against her husband's children for various alleged offenses in the past like grave threat, libel, public disturbance and grave oral defamation. She said she did not do so because "I pity them (Ganzon's children) because it seems they do not know what they are doing."

The Ganzon children, in their complaint, claimed they wrote Portigo and the other attending physicians on Oct. 26 and 27 asking to let their father undergo dialysis treatment "as an option recommended by nephrologist, Dr. Rosario Aceron."

Waiver

But Portigo, they said, recognized only the right of Rona as Ganzon's legal wife. They said that since Rona signed a waiver against the dialysis, her signature prevailed over the Ganzon children.

They said Lapascua even threatened Portigo that they would file charges against him if they would

not give in to their wishes. The physician reportedly only told them that it would be all right because he already had a lawyer.

On Oct. 28, a day before Ganzon died, two of the senator's grandchildren—Emerald Coverdale Ganzon and Dr. Jennifer Grendel Ganzon—approached Rona and asked her to reconsider.

But Rona, they said, turned them down, saying she already made her decision.

No further pain

The Ganzon children also cited the interview conducted by dyFM Bombo Radyo on Oct. 24 with Rona where she admitted that her husband's attending physicians had recommended that he undergo dialysis. In the interview, Rona said she decided against the treatment because she did not want to subject her husband to further pain.

Sneaky

She said she knew Ganzon himself would not also opt for the dialysis because he did not want to suffer.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on the day of Ganzon's death, Rona said she decided against the dialysis upon the request of her husband and after consulting some relatives. Among those she consulted, she said, was Patria G. Daban, 86, Ganzon's elder sister who, Rona claimed, also requested not to allow the former senator to endure more pain.

Ganzon, the opposition leader detained longest during martial law, died in the arms of Rona, a day after she turned 37. He was 81.

Four hours after his death, the Ganzon children sneaked his body out of St. Paul's Hospital without the consent of Rona and hospital authorities and brought him to the Ganzon Compound in San Antonio, Molo district.

Rights over body

They buried Ganzon's remains on Nov. 3 at the family mausoleum at the Molo public cemetery for fear that Rona might be able to secure a court order that would give her full rights over her husband's body.

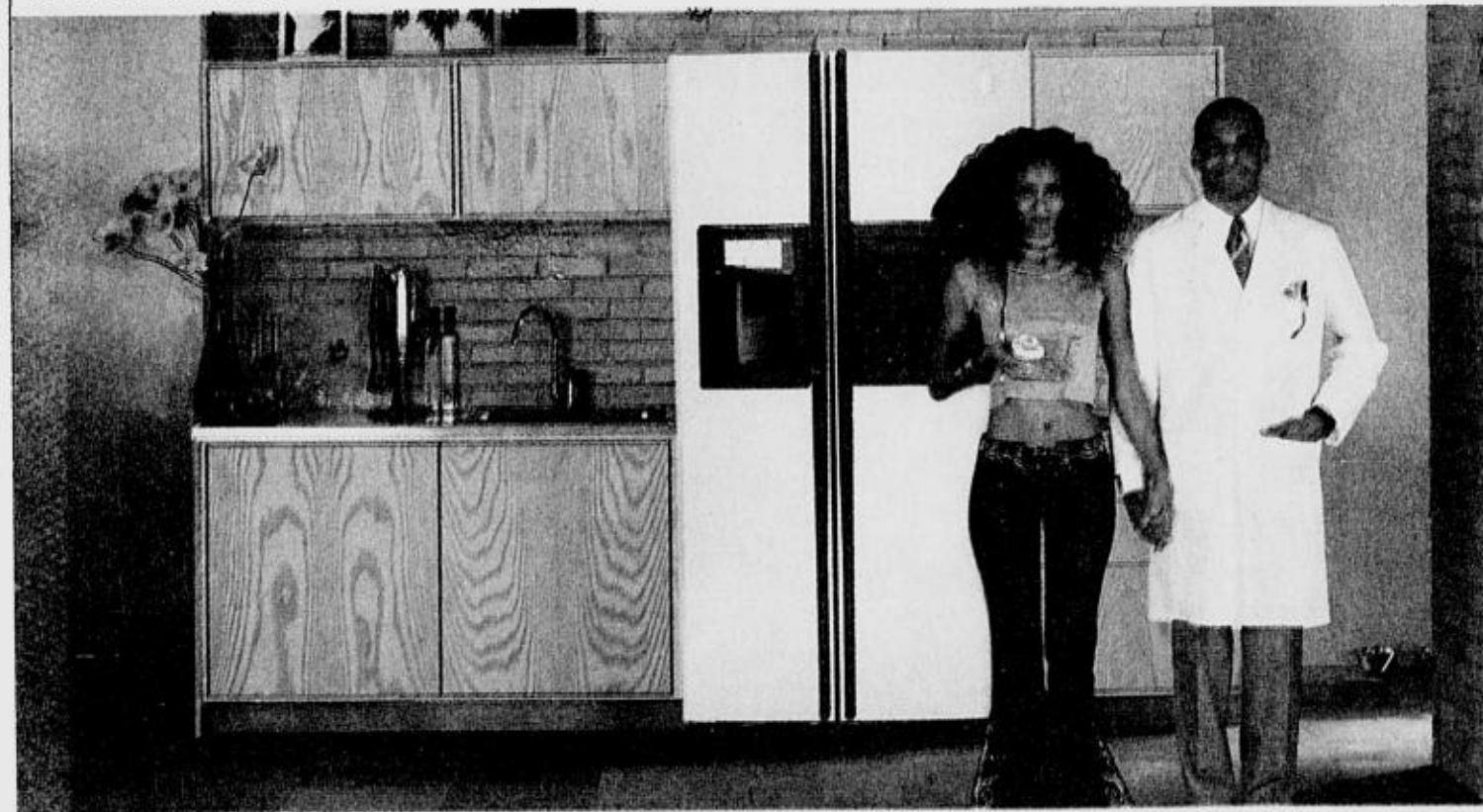
Ganzon's first wife died in 1989. He married Rona in civil rights in Cebu City in 1991, and in Catholic rites at the Tanza Catholic Parish Church in Iloilo City in 1998.

At odds over property

But his children never welcomed Rona into the family. Rona and her stepchildren have long been at odds over property rights.

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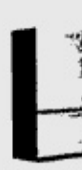
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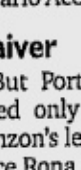
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BFP official: Firemen attacked again

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

FIREMEN complained of being attacked by fire victims amid a request for them to be allowed to carry guns for protection.

Fire chief Agapito Nacario of the Caloocan Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) said panicking residents hurled debris at responding firefighters during a blaze in Dagat-Dagatan, Caloocan City.

Volunteer fireman Glenn Angla of the Batas Volunteer Fire Brigade in Navotas told the INQUIRER that he was hit in the face with a pail by angry residents.

The residents, Angla said, wanted them to get on the roof of a burning house.

But Caloocan City police director

Benjardi Mantele said he did not hear or observe any violent incident during the blaze Monday night.

Mantele led the team that escorted the firemen to the scene.

The Caloocan police also did not get any complaints from the firemen.

Nacario, however, insisted that the incident happened.

The blaze that hit Block 4, Area 2, Sawata, Dagat-Dagatan, gutted at least eight houses. Damages were estimated at P500,000.

Fire Officer 3 Arvin David said they were looking at an unattended candle or a defective Christmas light as the cause of the fire.

Witnesses said they saw the fire start in between two adjacent houses: one had no electricity and was using candles. The other had Christmas lights on.

Nacario has written the Department of Interior and Local Government and the BFP and suggested the formation of an armed unit of firefighters to provide security to their colleagues.

But DILG undersecretary for peace and order Marius Corpus said that "there is no way the agency could grant their (firefighters) request."

Meanwhile, an 18-year-old man was electrocuted as fire razed six houses in Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Rene Tenedero of Hernandez Street, Barangay San Antonio, San Francisco del Monte, was reportedly trying to save some belongings when he stepped on a live wire that had fallen on the street.

Relatives rushed him to the St. Agnes Hospital but he was declared dead on arrival.

Fireman Juanito de la Cruz said the fire started at 12:50 p.m. and was put out at 2:08 p.m.

On late Monday afternoon, 70-year-old Alberto Hanopol of Matimtiman Street, Tondo, was hurt when fire hit his two-story house at 5:58 p.m.

Prior to the blaze, neighbors heard a loud explosion from the second floor of Hanopol's house. Moments later, flames were seen coming out of the windows.

Neighbors quickly ran upstairs to help the old man, who was reportedly suffering from arthritis.

According to Capt. Adan Bithao, chief of the Arson Division of the BFP in Manila, said Hanopol was hurt when his jaw hit a low wooden beam as he was carried out of his house.

The fire was declared put out at 6:10 p.m.

Binay slams BF for delays in roadwork

MAKATI City Mayor Jejomar Binay has turned his ire on Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando for the snail-paced work on Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo).

In a letter addressed to Fernando, Binay told the chair that if the MMDA could not do the project properly then it should just turn it over to the city government.

The mayor said that he was losing patience over the slow project pace, which was due to "obvious lack of planning and foresight."

Fernando had explained that the contractor, R-2 Builders, did not expect the avenue to be "heavily wired" with water and telephone lines, thus the project delay.

Binay said the city wished to explore the possibility of the MMDA giving the project to Makati, "together with whatever budget is still remaining."

He stressed that because of the mounting complaints, the local government, which is directly affected, should be given full responsibility for the project.

"Nagagalit na ako (I'm getting angry)," Binay said in a phone interview.

"If they really planned the project, it would not have ended this way," he added in Filipino.

Fernando, on the other hand, said he already terminated the foreign consultants responsible for the "unforeseen utility lines."

"There were old Nawasa water pipes which were not indicated in the original plan," he explained.

He added that they were waiting for the utility companies to finish relocating the cables and lines before finishing the project.

"But we assure the public that the project will be completed in March of next year," the MMDA chair stressed.

He said there was no need for the agency to hand the project over to the Makati government.

Margaux Ortiz

MMDA on bus scheme: Don't expect miracles

"I AM not apologizing for the project's imperfections."

This was what Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando had to say when asked to comment on the conduct of the Organized Bus Route (OBR) scheme being implemented on Edsa.

He added that the system—on its second day of implementation yesterday—still has a lot of room for improvement.

"We should not expect a miracle to happen in one or two days," Fernando yesterday told the INQUIRER. "Everyone's confusion regarding the new scheme is understandable."

But he stressed that the scheme is the only viable solution to the perennial traffic problem infesting one of the biggest routes in the world.

"Remember that we're dealing with 3,000 bus units and 6,000 to 8,000 drivers here, and these are not the best drivers in the world," Fernando said.

Bus operators, on the other hand, have expressed hope that the implementation of the Organized Bus Route would finally solve Edsa's traffic woes.

Integrated Metro Bus Owners Association (Imboa) president said their earnings on the scheme's first day of implementation was "satisfactory."

"It's too early to tell if the scheme will really work in our favor," Dela Fuente said. "But so far, the MMDA has been really encouraging us to keep faith in the project."

She also said Fernando has been more open-minded and considerate with the bus operators about the scheme.

Margaux Ortiz



SHARE-A-TOY WITH ORPHANS

The president's daughter, Ms. Luli Macapagal-Arroyo, and Ricky Reyes are shown here with some orphans dancing the "Otso-Otso." Children from different orphanages receive gifts and toys and get to go on carnival rides for free at the Boom na Boom Carnival Park at the CCP Complex. The Share-A-Toy project for poor children, sponsored by the Ricky Reyes Saloon, is on its 10th year.

Cop chief's wife, relatives injured in Manila melee

By Leila Salaverria

THE WIFE and two relatives of Central Police District director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro were injured in a stampede after four men, believed to be dismissed policemen, shot at the victims during an argument early yesterday morning.

Police said Castro's wife, Elvira, Elvira's sister, Julieta Manalang, and Remelyn Tolentino were attending the wake for Castro's mother-in-law, Asuncion Salvador, at the corner of Dinalupihan and Abad Santos streets in Tondo, Manila when shots rang out at 3:40 a.m.

Castro yesterday said in a phone interview that his wife suffered scratches when she fell on concrete steps during the stampede. Castro said his wife had tried to pacify one of the men who fired the shots.

The four men were said to be attending the wake for the mother of Rolando Alagde, legislative staff officer of Manila councilor Pacifico Laxa. The four escaped on board a white FX taxi and an owner-type jeep.

Supt. Rodolfo Llorca, Manila Station 7 commander, said they have already identified the suspects.

P02 Marlon Mallorca said that the four men went on a shooting spree when some of the guests at the wake of Asuncion Salvador disrupted their drinking session.

Boy, 8, shot by dueling drunks in Malabon

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

AN 8-YEAR-OLD boy yesterday was accidentally shot during a duel between two drunken men in Malabon City.

The boy, who was then inside the family residence in Tañong, Malabon City, sustained a gunshot wound in the right leg.

Case investigator PO1 Rommel Habig yesterday said that Crispin Equibal, 24, of Yangco Street,

Navotas, was drinking with his friends when he got into a heated argument with a certain Junior.

Just as Equibal was walking home at around noon, Junior allegedly pulled out a gun and shot Equibal in the back.

Wounded, Equibal turned to Junior, got out his own gun and fired. But the bullet hit the boy, who was in his house just a few meters away.

Junior fired again and hit Equibal in the belly, Habig told the INQUIRER.

Junior fled after the incident.

Responding barangay watchmen arrested Equibal.

Equibal and the boy were taken to the Tondo Medical Center.

Police also recovered Equibal's 38-caliber gun.

Police are now trying to find out why the two suspects were carrying guns.

An investigator said that they are checking out reports that the two men are part of a robbery gang.



In Metro Manila, political battle lines are drawn

By Margaux Ortiz, Alcuin Papa and Edson Tandoc Jr.

THREE mayors were conspicuously absent during last Monday's Metro Mayor's Council meeting at the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority building in Makati City.

The trio: Jejomar Binay of Makati, Wenceslao Trinidad of Pasay and Vergel Aguilar of Las Piñas will not support President Macapagal-Arroyo in next years elections.

"That meeting was meant only for those who support Gloria," Binay quipped.

Binay and Trinidad told the INQUIRER that their respective parties were supporting other candidates in the presidential race.

Binay's Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Laban (PDP-Laban) is set to announce their candidate today.

Trinidad said he "simply had to be loyal to his party."

Factions within Trinidad's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) has declared support for two separate candidates: action king Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Aguilar, on the other hand, an independent, said he would be supporting the candidate of Sen. Manny



TEN METRO Manila mayors link arms to proclaim their support for the President in the coming polls. Three other mayors have opted to sit on the other side of the political fence.

Villar and Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar.

Aguilar is a close political ally of Villar since Cynthia, the senator's wife, is his sister.

Meanwhile, the 10 other mayors declared "full and unwavering support" for the candidacy of Ms. Macapagal.

They held a summit at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila yesterday to throw

their support behind the President.

Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza in a speech said he was backing Ms. Macapagal because she had shown enthusiasm in working with local government units.

"She is the only president who personally leads the government's campaign against criminality," said Atienza who is president of the Metro

Manila Mayor's League.

For his part, actor-turned-mayor Reynaldo Malonzo said he would rather entrust the country to Ms. Macapagal than to a fellow showbiz personality like Poe.

"She started a lot of projects and it would be best for the country if she could continue what she has started," Malonzo said.

Don't shoot

EDGAR GARCIA on Monday was having lunch when a man barged inside his house on Galicia Street, Bangkulasi, Navotas, and shot him twice in front of his family. When the police questioned Garcia, 25, a fisherman, the victim denied he knew the gunman. But when the lawmen got round to questioning Garcia's mother-in-law, they learned that the victim had called out the gunman's name and begged the culprit not to shoot.

Edson Tandoc Jr.

TV host seeks annulment

CONNIE Sison, segment host of the ABS-CBN program "Magandang Umaga Bayan," has sued for annulment, citing her husband's failure to love, respect and be loyal to her. Sison, real name Maria Perpetua Concepcion Sison, filed a petition before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, claiming her husband, Carlos B. Sison III, is psychologically incapacitated to fulfill his marital obligations. Records showed that Sison, also a reporter of "TV Patrol," and her husband started their relationship when they were still students. The couple separated in 1998.

Tina Santos

End of the road for fugitive

FOR ALMOST a year, Raul Lazaro managed to elude arrest. But the police on Friday finally caught up with Lazaro in Navotas. The suspect was enjoying a cockfight, according to Oscar Padilla of the Northern Police District. Regional Trial Court Branch 129 Judge Silvestre Bello issued an arrest warrant for Lazaro, one of the suspects in the killing of Efren Bolima in February 2002. Padilla yesterday said Bolima's relatives went to his office in October and reported that they had been seeing Lazaro in their area.

Edson Tandoc Jr.

Life terms for 2

TWO MEN may have to spend up to four decades behind bars after Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 18 Judge Romulo Lopez found them guilty of killing SPO3 Nollie Libuit three years ago. Jon Arcan, 30, a native of Iloilo and an alleged Sputnik gang member, and Apolinario Ocquina, 35, of Marikina City, were each sentenced to life imprisonment. Court records showed that at around 5:30 a.m. on Jan. 11, 2000, the two accused, with a certain Leo Masaway, robbed the passengers of a jeepney in front of the Quiapo Church on Quezon Boulevard. Witnesses told the court that Libuit, a member of the national police's Intelligence Group, was killed when he tried to wrest the gun away from one of the suspects. Masaway was also killed in the robbery.

Tarra Quismundo

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WEDNESDAY,
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SPORTS

RP halfway through SEAG gold target

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Breakthrough wins in swimming and shooting that went with Ryan Rexel Fabriga's second gold medal yesterday boosted the Philippines halfway past its target of at least 40 golds in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

Miguel Mendoza, charged with the blunder that cost the Filipinos a gold in the men's 4x200 freestyle relay, redeemed himself with an im-

pressive victory in the men's 1,500 meters, in the process breaking the country's golden drought in the sport since 1997 in Jakarta.



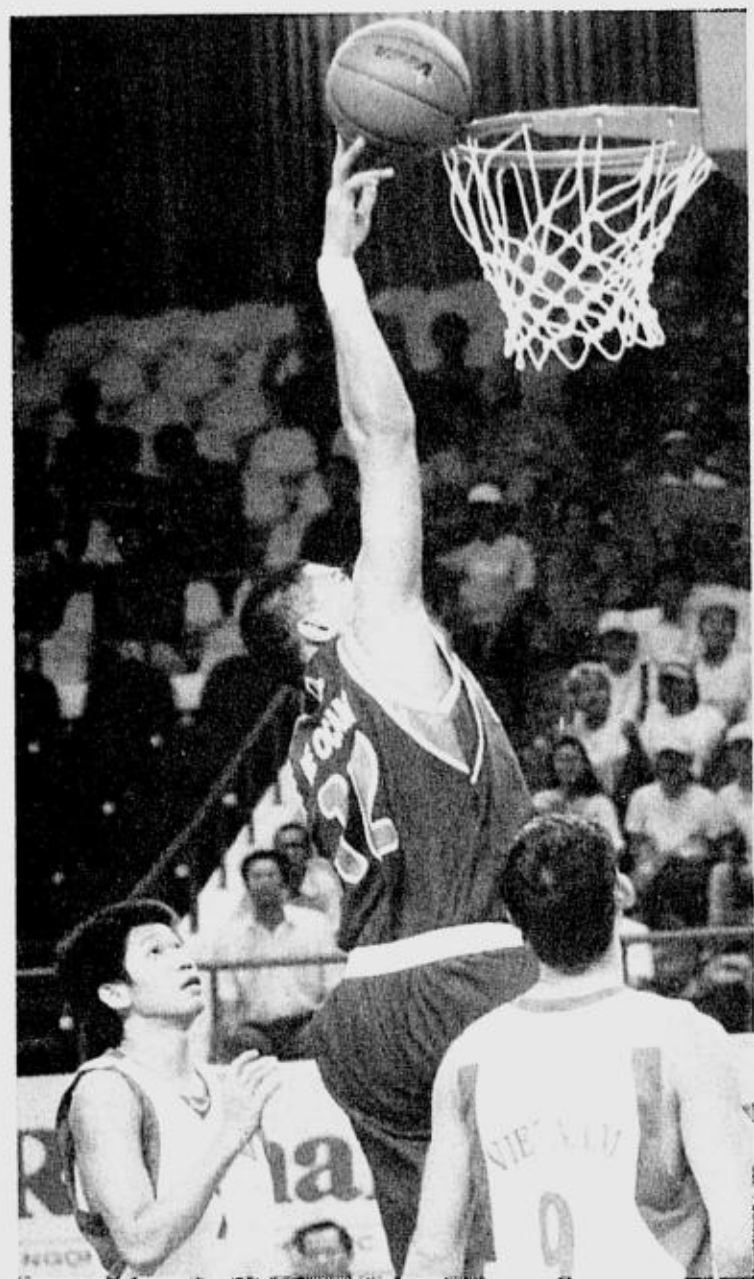
22nd SEA GAMES
VIET NAM
2003

Paced by the veteran Jaime Re-
cio, the men's trap squad came
through for shooting by just a single
point after the 18-year-old Fabriga,

the men's platform 10-meter cham-
pion, and Jaime Asok combined to
clinch diving's synchronized plat-
form 10-m gold.

Mendoza, a 21-year-old man-
agement information systems stu-
dent at the University of Georgia,
clocked 15 minutes 49.55 seconds
to beat Thailand's Chamvudth
Saengsri, who did 15:56.22.

Until his heroic effort, Mendoza
RP/A26



RANIDEL de Ocampo scores unmolested against the Vietnamese, exemplifying the Filipinos' superiority over their rivals in the game last night. It was the Nationals' second straight win. **EDWIN BACASMAS**

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Nationals whip lowly Viet quint

GAMES WEDNESDAY (Manila time)
3:30 p.m.—RP vs Vietnam (W)
5:30 p.m.—RP vs Singapore (M)
7:30 p.m.—Singapore vs Malaysia (W)
9:30 p.m.—Thailand vs Indonesia (M)

By Roy Luarda

HO CHI MINH—The Filipinos were in no mood to be generous to their hosts Tuesday night.

Flaunting the depth of its bench, RP-Cebuana Lhuillier routed Vietnam, 117-53, for its second straight blowout victory in men's basketball in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games at the Competition Hall here.

Applying full-court pressure, the Filipinos decided the outcome right in the first quarter when they erected a 34-12 spread to the delight of hundreds of flag-waving Filipino spectators.

Its first victim was Thailand, 85-49, Sunday. Coach Aric del Rosario had the luxury of rotating 11 players, with all of them contributing in the scoring.



Marc Pingris, who hurt his right hand against the Thais, did not see action.

Seven Filipinos scored in twin digits, with UAAP MVP James Yap of University of the East and Ervin Sotto of St. Francis of Assisi firing 17 points each.

YAP: Inspired game Allan Salangsang and Rich Alvarez, a two-time UAAP MVP with Ateneo de Manila, added 16 apiece; Richard Melencio chipped in 12 while Celino Cruz and Recaredo Callimag had 10 each.

Recovered from a three-day bout with allergy, Wesley Gonzales, another Ateneo Blue Eagle, scored seven.

The victory may prove costly though as PBL MVP Gary David hurt his right wrist following a hard fall early in the first quarter.

Melencio suffered back spasm and had to be brought out late in the third quarter.

Pounding the smaller Vietnamese under the boards, the Filipinos posted a big 39-14 edge in rebounds. They also showed better shooting, hitting eight of 16 free throws for a lofty 50 percent.

"Our defense was the key. We'll use the same strategy tomorrow," said coach Aric del Rosario.

Among those who watched the game were Philippine team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier, Basketball Association of the Philippines EVP Christian Tan, pro players Romel Adducul and Enrico Villanueva and a group of Ateneo supporters led by businessman Arven Santos.

Scores:
PHILIPPINES 117—Yap 17, Sotto 17, Salangsang 16, Alvarez 16, Melencio 12, Callimag 10, Cruz 10, Gonzales 7, De Ocampo 6, Madrid 4, David 2.

VIETNAM 53—To 15, Tiep 6, Bul 6, Du 5, La 5, Du 4, Nguyen OH 3, Trinh 2, Luong 2, Nguyen NH 2, Quach 2, Chong 1.

Quarters: 34-12, 66-20, 93-37, 117-53.

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Nokia 7650	P 1,335	P 30,000	24 months
Ericsson T-610	P 1,995	P 30,000	18 months
Nokia 6220	P 2,665	P 30,000	18 months
Nokia 6600	P 2,665	P 35,000	18 months
Ericsson P800	P 3,500	P 50,000	18 months

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REYES is all concentration as he tries to pull even in the 18th rack against Indonesian Muhammad Junarto. He took the rack but was shut out in the next two games. EDWIN BACASMAS

Magic deserts Bata in 9-ball

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—One gold gone.

Efren (Bata) Reyes' magic deserted him Tuesday as the anticipated 9-ball pool singles gold medal for the Philippines vanished in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

The world-renowned Reyes, a billiards Hall-of-Famer, bowed to Indon Muhammad Junarto, 11-9, in the semifinals, shocking expectant Filipinos at the Nguyen Du Sports Center.

"Ayaw makisama ng bola (The ball wouldn't fall)," said the 49-year-old Reyes. "Malas talaga. Kung anong tumama kay Django (Francisco Bustamante), tumama rin sa akin (Tough luck. What stopped Django also stopped me)."

Bustamante, the other half of the touted Filipino duo, was beaten by Vietnam's Nguyen Thanh Nam in the quarterfinals Monday night.

For a while, Reyes' prediction that the 9-ball gold would either go to him or Bustamante seemed to hold water.

He was ahead, 8-4, of the Indon he had beaten more than 10 years go, and was looking good.

Then it happened. "Nag-iba bigla, hindi maka-break (Some-

thing changed all of a sudden, I couldn't break)," rued Reyes, who won two golds in the 1999 SEAG.

The Indon took the next five racks to surge ahead, 9-8.

Reyes equalized, only to break empty in the 19th rack, yielding the rack to the Indon.

Though he still managed a wry smile, it was clear that Reyes was hurting.

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GMs Torre, Villamayor share lead

HO CHI MINH—Grandmasters Eugene Torre and Bong Villamayor beat their respective Myanmar opponents in the second round yesterday to share the lead in men's individual standard chess competitions at the Van Don Hall here.

Torre beat Htun Zaw Wynn with the black pieces, while Villamayor downed Naing Myo. GM Joey Antonio and Asian Zonal champion Ronald Dableo expectedly drew their board 3 match to tally 1.5 points, the same card of GM-candidate and rapid champion Mark Paragua.

Unable to crack Indon IM Lloe Dede's defense, Paragua settled for a draw.

The Filipinos, winners of the rapid team event, swept their first round assignments as they affirmed their

lofty ranking in this event being held for the first time in the biennial meet.

"So far we're also leading in the team event," said lawyer Sammy Estimo, secretary general of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

Under the nine-round Swiss format, the scores of a country's top four players count towards the team total.

"I'm confident that we'll also win the team event because all our players are strong, unlike Vietnam and Indonesia," added Estimo.

Vietnamese GM Dao Thien Hai, the highest ranked player with an Elo of 2590, has 1.5 points.

WIMs Beverly Mendoza and Christine Rose Mariano tote 1.5-point cards in women's play.

Mendoza, bronze medalist in women's individual rapid, beat Myanmar's Than Zin Mar Min with black while Mariano drew with Indon Darmayana Upi.

Roy Luarca

Beermen, Tigers in pivotal tiff

GAME TODAY (Cuneta Astrodome)
7 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Coca-Cola

SAN Miguel Beer and Coca-Cola fight for a pivotal Game 5 victory at the resumption of the Samsung-PBA Reinforced Conference Finals tonight at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Their best-of-seven series tied at 2-2, both the Beermen and the Tigers try to move a win away from clinching the season-ending championship in the 7 p.m. game.

The Tigers reduced the title showdown to a race-to-two affair with a come-from-behind 87-84 victory that saw Rudy Hatfield justify his conference MVP award with a go-ahead triple and a block on Dondon Hontiveros' potential overtime-sending trey.

San Miguel Beer team manager Robert Non said Kwan Johnson is fast recovering from a groin injury which has hampered the import from matching up with best reinforcement of the conference, Tee McClary, who hit 34 points in Game 4.

"By gametime, he told me he'll be more than 100 percent ready," said Non.

Coke coach Chot Reyes believes Game 5 will be a battle of attrition and expects each team to focus on its strengths and pounce the enemy's weaknesses.

"There will be no strategies in Game 5. No X and Os," said Reyes. **June Navarro**

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Wind Blown: The 'ugly duckling' who struck gold

IN a fitting tribute to a champion horse, thousands of racing aficionados bade farewell to the retiring Wind Blown last Sunday at the Santa Ana Park.

"I owe it to the fans, my fellow breeders and horseowners and the racing officials to host the memorable day because these are the people who made things happen for Wind Blown," said much admired sportsman-businessman Hermie Esguerra, owner of the country's richest, most famous and multi-awarded horse in Philippine racing history.

Horse of the Year for three consecutive years, holder of an awesome record of 36 victories (24 in stakes races) in 49 starts and the leading money earner of all time with winnings of P18,970,695, Wind Blown's early years promised nothing lofty. The colt by Hazm out of Wind in My Hair didn't look forbidding enough when he was foaled in May in 1997 at Sandy Javier's Royal Maverick Ranch in Rosario, Batangas.

As a matter of fact, Wind Blown hardly merited a second look from prospective buyers, according to Javier. "He was too lanky, very disproportionate, *parang malaking kangkarot* (like a big, unwieldy thing)," Javier stressed. "My offers were turned down because nobody wanted him. And the few buyers who showed interest merely offered very cheap prices. I already spent P400,000 just to maintain him when he was still a 2-year-old colt and yet the best offer I received was only for P250,000. So I decided to run him myself."

But the big bay colt did not make much of an impact on the racing scene. At age two, his best effort was a second-place finish behind Great Year in the Marho Breeders' Cup Juvenile Colts race. But at three, Wind Blown started to make his presence felt, winning 11 races in 16 starts, including four stakes races—the third leg of the Philippine Triple Crown,

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

the Grand Futurity at Santa Ana, the SMB Marho Breeders' Cup for 3-Year-Old Colts and the PCSO Presidential Gold Cup. For these achievements, Wind Blown was named the 2000 Horse of the Year.

Following his transfer to the powerhouse Hermie Esguerra Stable in 2001, Wind Blown, then four years old, further boosted his stock, posting runaway victories in eight stakes races, namely the Philracom Chairman's Cup, PCSO First Gentleman's Silver Cup, the Manila Jockey Club Founders' Cup, Gran Copa de Manila, TAB Phils.-Philracom Ope, SMB Marho Breeders' Cup Classic, Presidential Gold Cup and Philracom Classic Cup. He won nine of 10 outings, making him the unanimous choice as Horse of the Year by the Philippine Sportswriters Association, Philippine Racing Commission and Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization.

In 2002, at the age of five, Wind Blown continued his illustrious career, capturing 11 races in 13 outings to bag back-to-back PSA Horse of the Year award. Late this year Wind Blown, now six years old, defied the odds, winning all three comeback races in style including his farewell race at the highly successful 8th SMB-Marho Breeders' Cup Classic last Nov. 23 at Santa Ana where he pulled a hat-trick.

"It's a fitting reward for Wind Blown to have

a good time now that he is retired to stud," said veteran racing columnist Johnny Decena. "It's about time *na mang-chick naman siya* (that he gets a partner)," he added in jest.

Ricardo "Ompong" Jabobe, Wind Blown's exercise rider since 1999, said the champion horse has touched his life in many ways, foremost of which is helping him financially. "For sure, I will miss him. But I'm still happy that Wind Blown is being retired for breeding purposes because he will sire champion progenies like him."

Nestor Manalang, Wind Blown's fifth and final trainer, said the horse is truly exceptional being cool-headed at all times and in excellent health even at his age. "He has phenomenal strength," stressed Manalang. "I told Mr. Esguerra that Wind Blown has nothing left to prove. And I believe that he has a bright future as a sire because of his many accomplishments."

According to battle-tested Jeffril Zarate, one of seven jockeys who rode the super horse to victories, Wind Blown is his favorite. "He is easy to ride. One does not even have to use the whip because all the jockey has to do is guide him and he will do the rest."

Wind Blown will stand his first season next year at the Herma Farm and Stud in Dagatan, Lipa City. The stud fee is still being studied, but already confirmed is the news that his future progenies will be entitled to receive prizes and bonus incentives that will ensure potential earnings of about P8 million through the Wind Blown Sire's Produce Incentive Program. All progenies of Wind Blown during his first season as a sire in 2004, which will be foaled in 2005, will be eligible to participate and win prizes in Wind Blown juvenile colts and juvenile fillies stakes races scheduled during the last quarter of 2007. The races will be exclusively for Wind Blown progenies only.

SPORTSWATCH

Lunas fights Thai, eyes world title fight

PAN Asia Boxing Association (Paba) flyweight champion Rolly Lunas is leaving no stone unturned in his bid to give the country another world boxing title next year. In his quest for a shot at the world crown, Lunas will stake his Paba title against veteran Thai champion Phises Vor Surapol on Dec. 19 at the People's Gym in Balanga, Bataan. The 19-year-old Lunas (15-2, 8 KOs) is rated No. 14 by the World Boxing Association (WBA) and will improve his ranking if he wins convincingly over Surapol. Promoter Jun Sarreal said a victory for Lunas will give the the Filipino an easier way of barging into the top 10 ratings. "Lunas is on track to realize his dream of becoming a world champion. But he must focus first on his coming title defense in Bataan because Surapol is not a 'flash in the pan' type of fighter," said Sarreal. The Lunas-Surapol 12-round encounter, billed as the "Bakbakan sa Bataan Part III," is presented by LS International in cooperation with Bataan Gov. Leonardo "Ding" Roman. Proceeds of the fight will go to the construction of a public library in Balanga City, Bataan.

'Pasko na sa Pasay' derby unfolds today

THE "PASKO Na Sa Pasay 4-Cock Derby," one of two major attractions at Pasay City Cockpit every year apart from the PGC Anniversary Derby, unfolds today at 1 p.m. with Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite and Sagupaan B-50 Forten as sponsors. Quality fights are lined up in today's 2-cock elimination round while the championship round, where a participant can field four cocks, is set this Friday. A mix of big-time and medium-scale cocks are seeing action, according to popular derby and hackfight promoter Eric dela Rosa, who is also the new pit manager at Santa Ana Cockpit beside the Santa Ana Park. A whopping prize of P600,000 await the champions and P250,000 to the runner-up finishers. The champion handler and gaffer gets P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. Entry fee is only P8,800. For inquiries call, 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

NCA championship round under way

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of the NCA 7-Cock Derby gets underway at 5 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum. From a cast of 33, only three cocks posted perfect scores of three points in last Monday's elimination round—newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet (Greenwood Balbina), Matt Bitanga (Golden Circle II) and Gov. Ito Yfiaras-former ambassador Danding Cojuangco (Binangonan Balbina I). With 2.5 points were entries Lucky Rin I and Thunderbird Firefly I, while those with two victories were Mulawin A Jimafer, SJ Joke Joke Joke, Firely Thunderbird 13, Sabong RT 114 J and S808, Winslet Paniqui, Guts and Glory, Lucky Rin, Thunderbird Firely II and Swing MG PNEC I. The next 7-Cock derby is scheduled next Monday and Wednesday, Dec. 15 and 17, also at the Araneta.

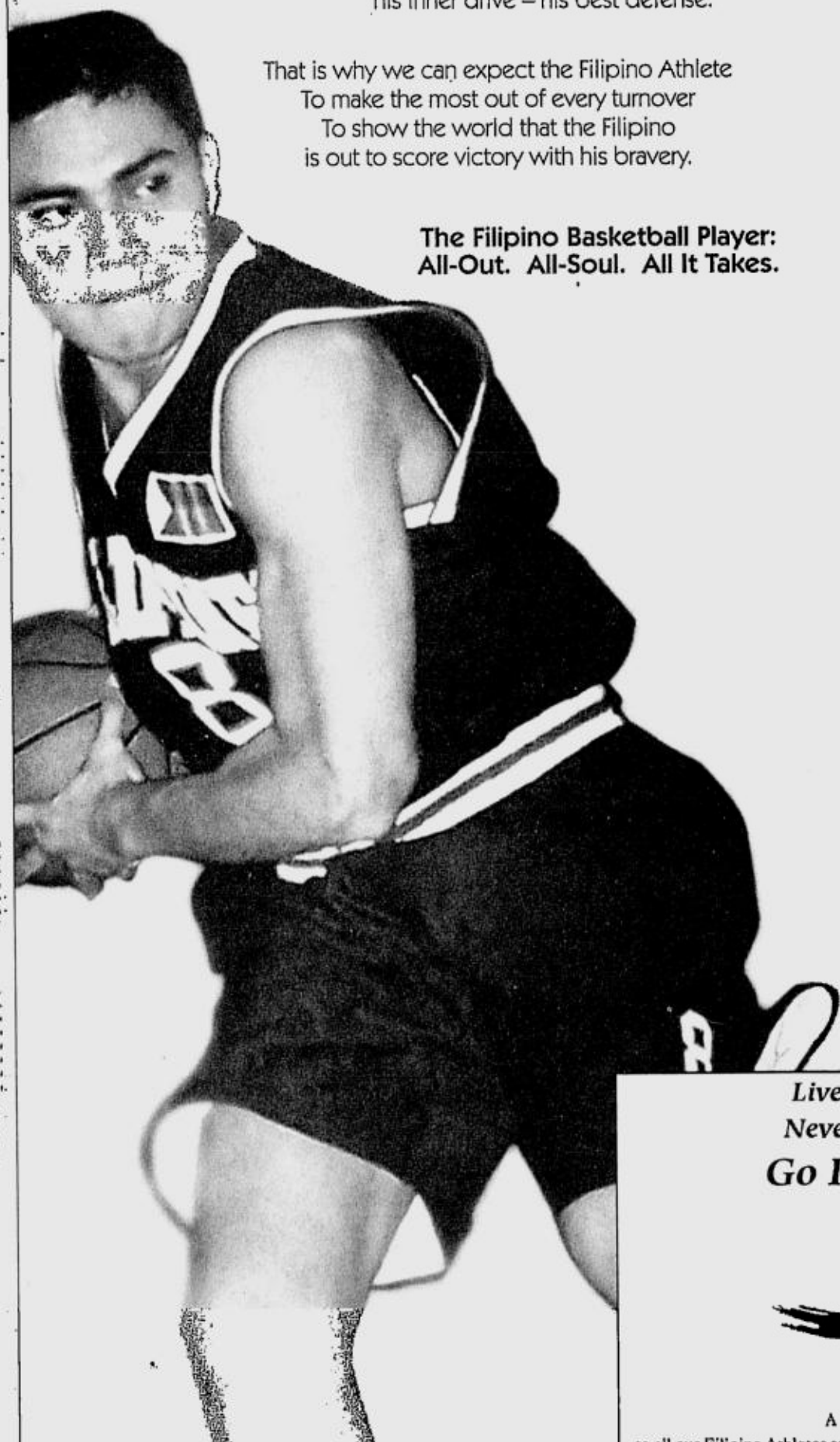
Drive

The harder the Filipino is pressed, the more he bounces back.

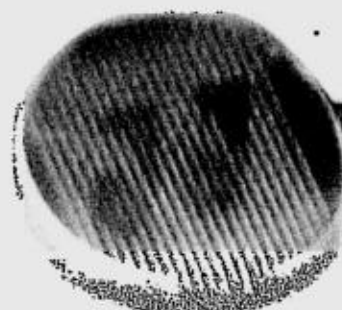
Simply because he charges everything to experience
For he stands guard to his principles,
his inner drive – his best defense.

That is why we can expect the Filipino Athlete
To make the most out of every turnover
To show the world that the Filipino
is out to score victory with his bravery.

The Filipino Basketball Player:
All-Out. All-Soul. All It Takes.



Catch all the action primetime on
Dec. 5 to 13 at NBN • Dec. 6 to 13 at ABC



Agility

When the going gets tough, the Filipino knows how to hold court.

In a single flick, his passion is unleashed,
His spirit refusing to be smashed
He shuttles from place to place with sheer grace.

That is why we can expect the Filipino Athlete
To challenge boundaries of uncertainty
To show the world that the Filipino
is out serve his best for good of his country.

The Filipino Badminton Player:
All-Out. All-Soul. All It Takes.



Live your dreams.
Never ever give up.
Go Philippines.



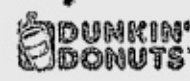
22nd SEA GAMES
VIET NAM
2003

A message of support

to all our Filipino Athletes competing in the 22nd SEA Games in Vietnam
from:

The Philippine Olympic Committee and The Philippine Daily Inquirer

To all our sponsors,
Thank you for your generosity
and sense of patriotism



Producers:

JEMAH
TELEVISION, INC



Stars, bands in Baguio mall bash

**SHOW
TIME**

ABANAO Square, the mall in the heart of Baguio City, recently marked its first anniversary, with the support of Smart Buddy GSM.

Customers were treated to a three-day sale, with outlets offering as much as 50 discount on selected items.

The mall's roof deck was transformed into a party venue where merry-making took place for two straight days. On the first day, stylish labels Free-way, Solo, rri, and Airwalk Outland were displayed in a fashion show.

The bands Fore-play and Silk also performed.

The next day, more people flocked to Abanao Square to watch the Band Square-Off competition.

Suburbia romped off with the top prize, followed by The Bred and Zapped. The prizes were awarded by TV host Alicia Mayer and Power 4's Jay Salas and Greg Martin.



MARTIN

Paolo has 'rare'...

From page A30

had been moved to a private room.

"Paolo gets a lot of heart burns," she said. "So we thought it was just a major heartburn case. They took his chest x-ray and ECG and the results were clear. But when they took a blood test, there was a certain enzyme in his bloodstream that was too strong."

Angeli said she realized how serious her son's illness was when her doctor sister did not stop sending her text messages, asking her to describe Paolo's symptoms.

Angeli said Paolo had fever, sore throat, headache, chest pains and had difficulty lying flat on his back.

She said her son already had fever when he went to a party on Saturday night.

"He was supposed to come home but didn't," she said.

"I panicked when I received a text message that said Paolo couldn't breathe."

Paolo's father Gary was diagnosed to have juvenile diabetes in 1979.

Angeli herself was operated on for scoliosis in 1986 and now has two metal rods in her spine.

Angeli said Gary's sugar level became very high because of stress over Paolo's condition.

OPENS TODAY EXCLUSIVELY AT


OFFICIAL SELECTION CANNES 2002
BEST FOREIGN FILM - 2003 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE

In China, in the early 70's during the dark years of the "Cultural Revolution", Ma and Luo, two teenagers considered as "bourgeois intellectuals" by the system, are sent to the small village of Sichuan in order to be "reeducated" into contact with the population. In this sinister period where the majority of books are prohibited and weddings before the age of 25 are illegal, Ma and Luo will clandestinely discover literature and love at the same time.

"A CINEMATIC POEM."

— Kirk Honeycutt, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

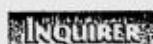
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)



COFFEE CLUB DISCUSSION ON
"BALZAC & THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS"
TODAY (Dec. 10) at 7pm. Admission Price: P100
For inquiries, contact 752-7866 or 752-7865.

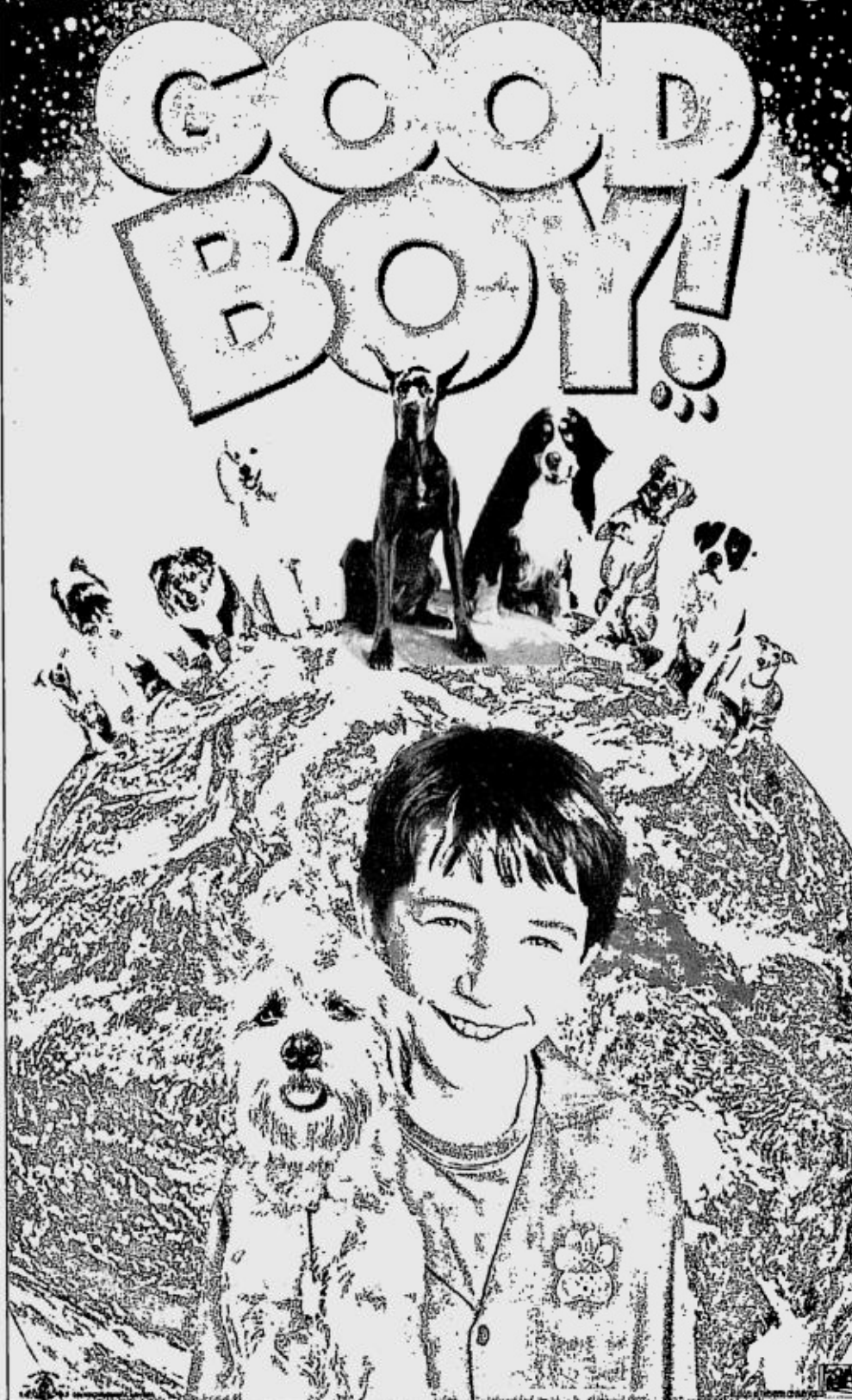


SKYFILMS



MTRCB G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

This Year... Earth is going to the Dogs



GRAND OPENING TODAY

OPENS TODAY! IN SELECTED THEATERS ONLY

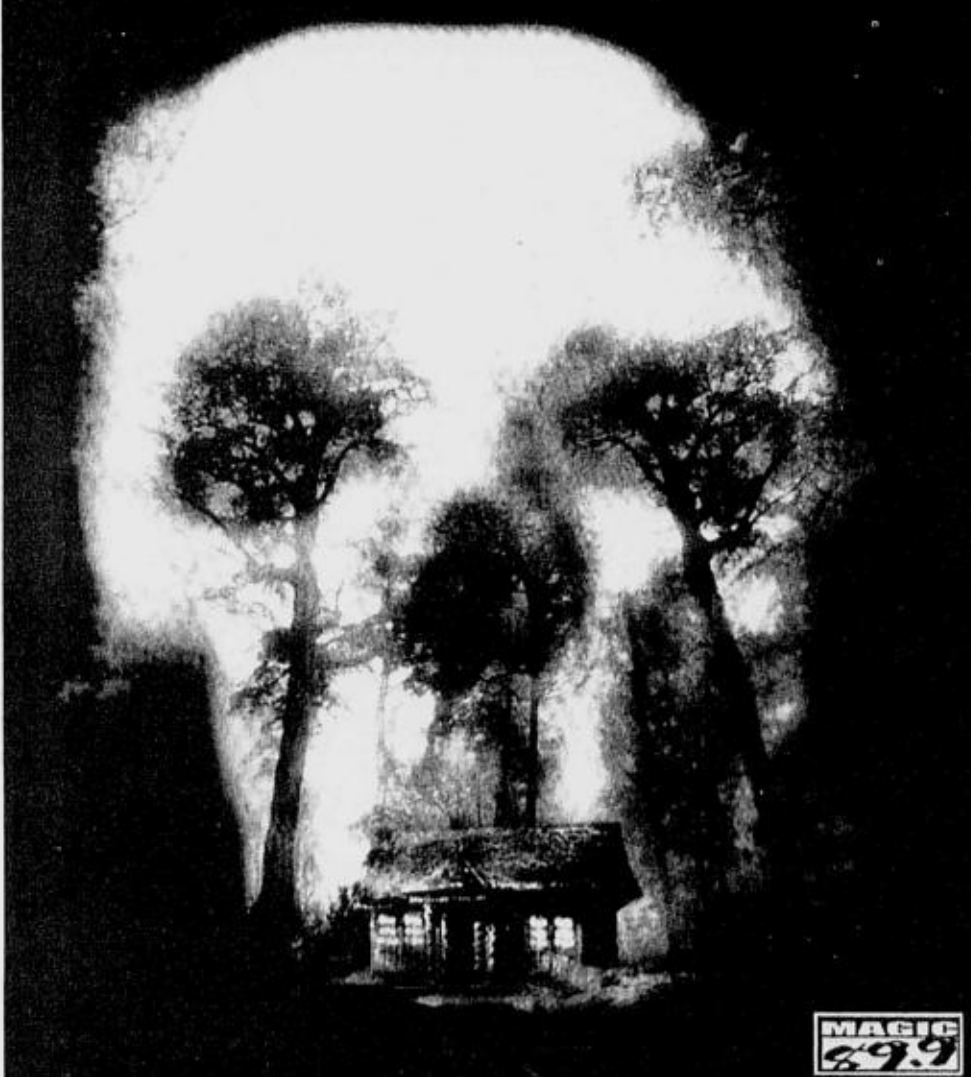
MTRCB R-18 No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted

NAKAKATAKOT

WARNING... IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU. As hot as today's headlines!

First the high fever, followed by shortness of breath, then dry cough, headache and muscular stiffness. Then a slow painful death awaits the victim as the demonic virus slowly devours your body tissues.

**NO PLACE TO HIDE, NO PLACE TO RUN,
EVIL STRIKES FROM WITHIN.**

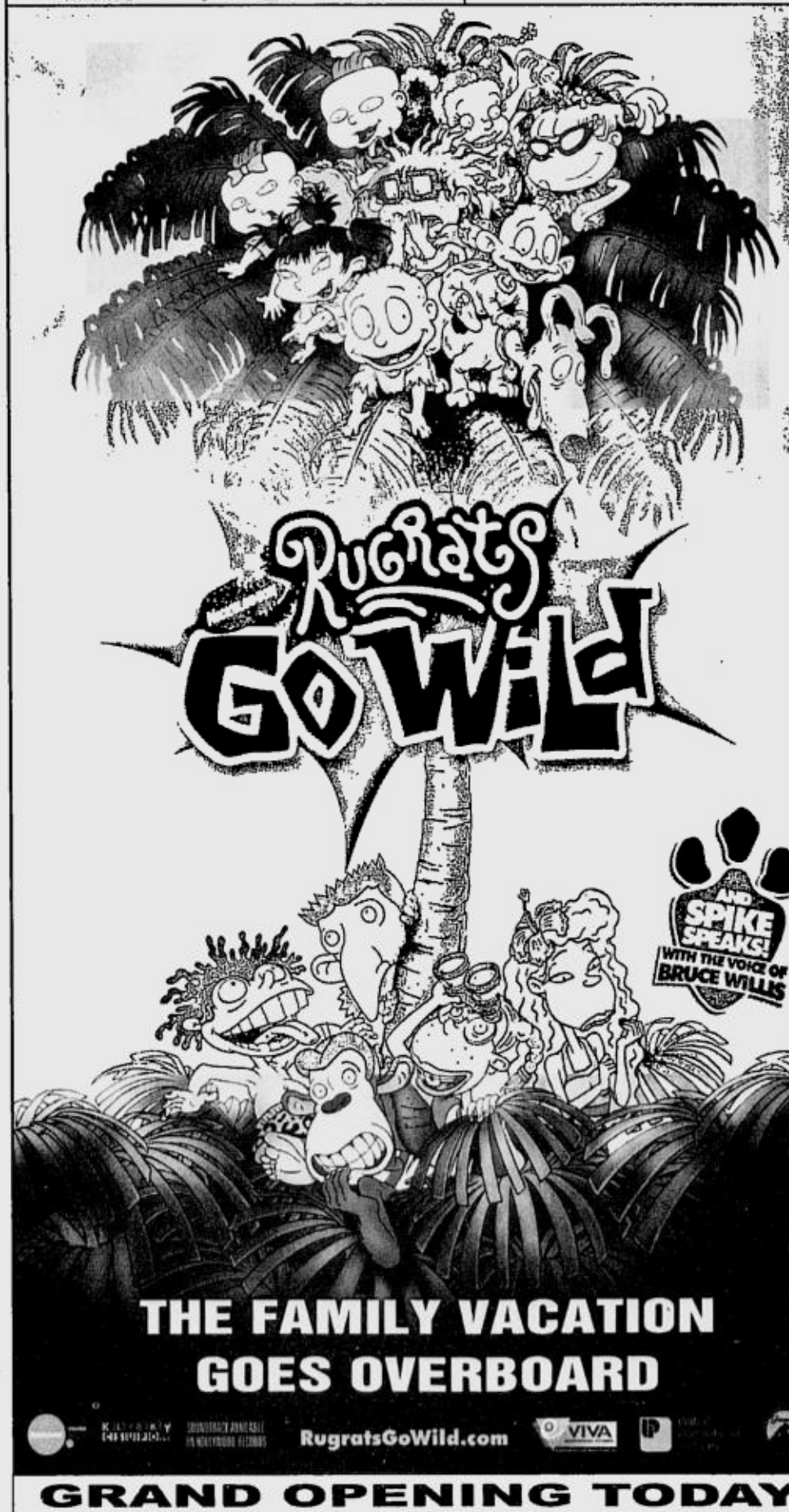


CABIN FEVER

CATCH IT!

LIONS GATE FILMS PRESENTS CABIN FEVER STARRING RIDER STRONG JORDAN LADCO JOEY KERN JAMES DE BELLO CERRIA VINCENT GIUSEPPE ANDREWS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ELI ROTH
PRODUCED BY RANDY PEARLSTEIN PRODUCED BY ELI ROTH LAUREN MOEVS SAM FROELICH DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SCOTT NEUBURN CONSULTANTS NATHAN BARR & ANGELO BALADAMENTI

MTRCB G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED



**THE FAMILY VACATION
GOES OVERBOARD**

KILLER MOVIE SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON MCA RECORDS
RugratsGoWild.com VIVA UP

GRAND OPENING TODAY

A30

ENTERTAINMENT

Paolo has
'rare' disease

By Marinel R. Cruz

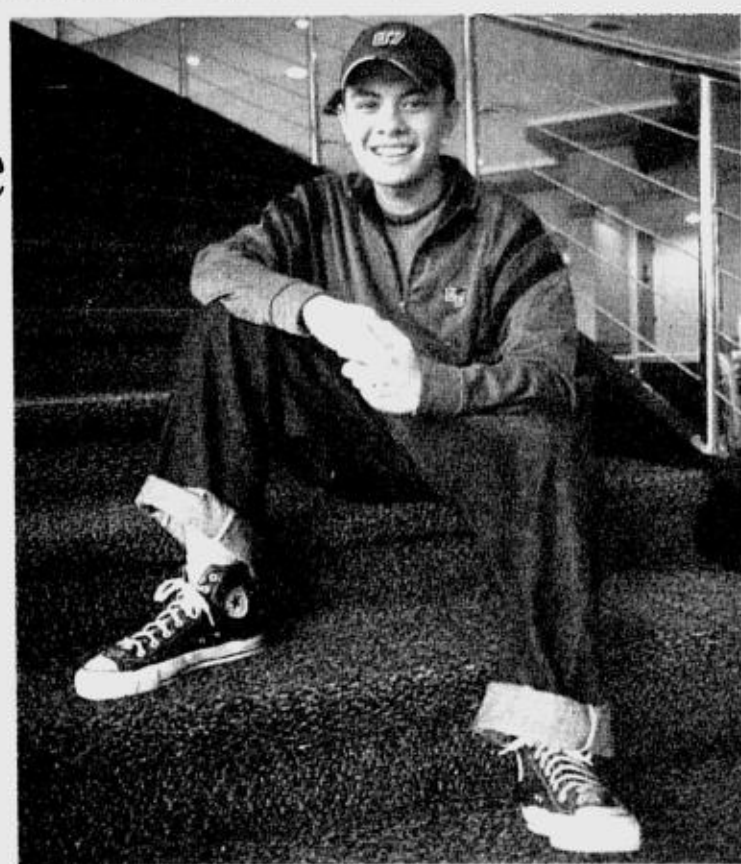
SINGER Gary Valenciano's son Paolo, 19, yesterday left the intensive care unit of the Cardinal Santos Memorial Medical Center in Greenhills, San Juan, his condition stable, after he was diagnosed with a heart disease.

According to his mother, Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano, Paolo was brought to the hospital last Dec. 6 at 10:30 p.m. after he complained of chest pain and difficulty in breathing.

"Paolo has acute myocarditis," Angeli said. "But he's showing a good prognosis, meaning it's not intensifying."

Angeli quoted the doctor as saying that myocarditis is rare and that only one out of 20,000 people could be infected.

According to Internet information on the disease, in myocarditis, the heart muscles become inflamed and weakened, causing symptoms of heart failure, which may mimic a heart attack. The condition may be caused by exposure to chemicals or allergic reactions to certain medications.



VALENCIANO. "Acute myocarditis"

JIM GUIAO/PUNZALAN

Angeli said Paolo's doctor ordered him to see a heart doctor regularly and forbade him from doing any strenuous exercise.

"He must watch himself because there's a possibility that his heartbeat could still be abnormal for four to six months," Angeli said on Monday night at the hospital, where her son

PAOLO/A29

ALL DIGITAL SOUND
AYALA CINEMAS
PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 ELF	1 ELF	1 BALZAC	1 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	1 MYSTIC RIVER
2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 THE GRUDGE	2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 CABIN FEVER	3 GOOD BOY	3 MYSTIC RIVER	3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 RUGRATS GO WILD	4 REGINE VELASQUEZ	4 ELF	4 GOOD BOY
	5 RUGRATS GO WILD	5 RUGRATS GO WILD	5 OUT OF TIME	5 RUGRATS GO WILD
	6 MYSTIC RIVER			
	7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2			

For screening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest	GOTESCO CINEMA	Cinema 2000 Target Mall
1 JEEPERS CREEPERS	1 RESERVE	1 STAR RUNNER
2 CABIN FEVER	2 RESERVE	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 OUT OF TIME	3 JEEPERS CREEPERS	3 OUT OF TIME
4 GOOD BOY	4 GOOD BOY	4 STAR RUNNER
5 RUGRATS GO WILD	5 MYSTIC RIVER	5 STAR RUNNER
6 MYSTIC RIVER	6 RUGRATS GO WILD	6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	7 JEEPERS CREEPERS	7 OUT OF TIME
8 MR. SUAVE	8 GOOD BOY	8 WISHER
9 ELF	9 GOOD BOY	9 WISHER
10 THE GRUDGE-1	10 GOOD BOY	10 WISHER

Pearl Plaza Cinemas	Gotesco Commonwealth	Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
1 RESERVE	1 ALIPIN	1 STAR RUNNER
2 RESERVE	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 RESERVE	3 STAR RUNNER	3 OUT OF TIME
4 RESERVE	4 CABIN FEVER	4 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
5 RESERVE	5 MR. SUAVE	5 OUT OF TIME
6 RESERVE	6 JEEPERS CREEPERS	6 WISHER
7 RESERVE	7 GOOD BOY	7 WISHER
8 RESERVE	8 GOOD BOY	8 WISHER
9 RESERVE	9 GOOD BOY	9 WISHER
10 RESERVE	10 GOOD BOY	10 WISHER

Maragana	Universal	Lianas Cinema
1 ALIPIN	1 RESERVE	1 THE TRAIN
2 STAR RUNNER	2 RESERVE	2 EVANGELINE KATOSOR
3 MR. SUAVE	3 RESERVE	3 18 KARAT
	4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN
	5 RESERVE	5 STAR RUNNER
	6 RESERVE	6 OUT OF TIME
	7 RESERVE	7 SEX SCANDAL
	8 RESERVE	8 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
	9 RESERVE	9 ALIPIN
	10 RESERVE	10 STAR RUNNER

starmall	Dilson	Lianas MovieCity
1 OUT OF TIME	1 ALIPIN	1 STAR RUNNER
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	2 ALIPIN	2 OUT OF TIME
3 CABIN FEVER	3 ALIPIN	3 SEX SCANDAL
4 MYSTIC RIVER	4 ALIPIN	4 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
5 ALIPIN	5 ALIPIN	5 STAR RUNNER

METROPOLIS	Mandayong	Olivarez Tri-Cinema
1 ALIPIN	1 ALIPIN	1 MAPUPULANG LABI
2 CABIN FEVER	2 ALIPIN	2 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3 MYSTIC RIVER	3 ALIPIN	3 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
4 INTERNET QUEEN	4 ALIPIN	4 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
5 STAR RUNNER	5 ALIPIN	5 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
6 GOLD CREEK MANOR	6 ALIPIN	6 BABAE SA BREAK WATER

M	Isetann Cinemas Complex Recto	Olivarez Los Baños
1 ALIPIN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 STAR RUNNER
2 CABIN FEVER	2 GOOD BOY	2 OUT OF TIME
3 MYSTIC RIVER	3 GOOD BOY	3 OUT OF TIME
4 INTERNET QUEEN	4 CABIN FEVER	4 MAPUPULANG LABI
5 STAR RUNNER	5 ALIPIN	5 MAPUPULANG LABI
6 GOLD CREEK MANOR	6 ALIPIN	6 MAPUPULANG LABI

FRC Cinema	Berna Cinema	Emperor
1 TALABA BACCOR CAVITE	1 ALIPIN	1 ROSARIO CAVITE
2 RESERVE	2 ALIPIN	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 RESERVE	3 ALIPIN	3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN	4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 RESERVE	5 ALIPIN	5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 RESERVE	6 ALIPIN	6 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

Premiere	Aranea	Fiesta World Mall
1 (Makati City)	1 ALIPIN	1 (Lipa) tel (043) 981-0790
2 (093-4225, 892-2503)	2 ALIPIN	2 OUT OF TIME
	3 ALIPIN	3 FIGHTING TEMPTATION
	4 ALIPIN	4 STAR RUNNER
	5 ALIPIN	5 BABAE SA BREAK WATER

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

FRC Cinema	Berna Cinema	Emperor
1 TALABA BACCOR CAVITE	1 ALIPIN	1 ROSARIO CAVITE
2 RESERVE	2 ALIPIN	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 RESERVE	3 ALIPIN	3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN	4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 RESERVE	5 ALIPIN	5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 RESERVE	6 ALIPIN	6 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

FRC Cinema	Berna Cinema	Emperor
1 TALABA BACCOR CAVITE	1 ALIPIN	1 ROSARIO CAVITE
2 RESERVE	2 ALIPIN	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 RESERVE	3 ALIPIN	3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN	4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 RESERVE	5 ALIPIN	5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 RESERVE	6 ALIPIN	6 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

FRC Cinema	Berna Cinema	Emperor
1 TALABA BACCOR CAVITE	1 ALIPIN	1 ROSARIO CAVITE
2 RESERVE	2 ALIPIN	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 RESERVE	3 ALIPIN	3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN	4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 RESERVE	5 ALIPIN	5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 RESERVE	6 ALIPIN	6 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

FRC Cinema	Berna Cinema	Emperor
1 TALABA BACCOR CAVITE	1 ALIPIN	1 ROSARIO CAVITE
2 RESERVE	2 ALIPIN	2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 RESERVE	3 ALIPIN	3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 RESERVE	4 ALIPIN	4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 RESERVE	5 ALIPIN	5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
6 RESERVE	6 ALIPIN	6 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

Center Plaza Cinema	Fairview Center Mall, Inc.	Sunshine
1 BALANGA, BATAAN	1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1 (FTI, Taguig)
2 (047) 237-7007	2 LOONEY TUNES	2 (776-74-21)
	3 LOONEY TUNES	3 (776-74-21)
	4 LOONEY TUNES	4 (776-74-21)

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No: 8981440-41

ELF GP 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	GOODBOY GP 12:00, 1:50, 3:40, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	RUGRATS GO WILD GP 12:30, 2:20, 4:10, 6:00, 7:50, 9:40
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	CABIN FEVER R18 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	MYSTIC RIVER R13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

WIN A SEGWAY

Get a raffle coupon for every P500 purchase

POWER PLANT MALL

NOW SHOWING!

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA

The film that toppled THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS in the US BOX OFFICE.

Elf

A GIANT WITH A HEART OF GOLD AND A BAGFUL OF PURE MAGIC.

"LAUGH 'TILL YOU DROP... THE FUNNIEST MOVIE OF THE YEAR."

-Nick LaSalle, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"Timeless, touching and hilarious beyond all description."

-Wade Major, BOXOFFICEMAGAZINE

"You'll laugh hard, you'll laugh often, and you'll leave wishing you still believed in Santa."

-Tom Long, DETROIT NEWS

Aranea Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	ALIPIN
Ali 2	ELF
Ali 3	CABIN FEVER
Ali 4	MYSTIC RIVER
Ali 5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Ali 6	RUGRATS
Ali 7	GOODBOY

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL

OPENS THURSDAY DEC. 11

ARANETA COLISEUM

DEC 10	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 14	PBA FINALS (if necessary)
DEC 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 17	NCA 7-COCK DERBY

Opens Dec. 23 "Beauty & The Beast"

BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY AND GET THE BEST SEATS!

Call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA	
ODEON	X-MEN 2	
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN	
ROBEN	BOLD STAR	
TANDEM-1	SUGAT	
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO	
TIMES	SPY - LEGEND OF CRIMINALE	

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND	
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT	
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN	
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY	
CORONET A	BABAE SA BREAKWATER	
CORONET B	A MAN APART	
QUEZON-1	BERTUNG PUTIK	
REMAR	X-MEN 2	
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR	

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER	
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70	
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)	
CINEMA-1	MR. SUAVE	
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN	
CINEMA-3	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	OUT OF TIME	
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER	
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT	
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER	
CINEMA-8	18 KARATS	
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	GOOD BOY	
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MYSTIC RIVER	
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RUGRATS GO WILD	
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER	
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	
CINEMA-15	ELF	

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND	
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT	

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	WRONG TURN	
CINEMA-1	CHAVIT	
CINEMA-2	LOONEY TUNES	
CINEMA-4	DARK BLITZ	

UNIWIIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND	
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT	
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II	
CINEMA-4	SELDON	

Boob tube boobos

HOST: This is a very colorful and unique dance number that your folk dance group is performing. Can you describe it to us?

Guest: Gladly! This unique dance comes from a place in the province where there's a lot of gold mining—that's why may *hawak ang mga dancers na mga gold mines!* (Ano raw?)

Host: Any final greetings before we say goodbye?

Guest: Oh, yes, congratulations to my sister!

Host: What is she celebrating? Birthday?

Guest: No, she just gave birth to a bouncing baby. (Bounce, bounce...)

Host: What do you like doing when you aren't working?

Guest: Oh, nothing much, I just like playing a bits.

(A bits—like *tongits?*)

Host: What to you is good acting?

Guest: It's when you confuse the actor and the rule, and confuse the actress and the rule. (Overruled!)

Host: You are being accused of malversation of official funds. What is your defense?

Guest: It's not true, and I can prove it. *Meron akong pinirmahan sa everything na tinanggap at dinibura kong pera!* (Promise, ha?)

Host: What can people do if they want to make *reklamo* about a *katiwalian* they experience in dealings with the government?

Guest: Simple, all they have to do is pile a complain. (Ok, pine!)

Host: We hope you liked our show today, we worked so hard to give it to you!

Co-host: *Talaga!* Straight *talaga kami* hand to mouth para *mabigyan namin kayo ng magandang program!*

(Great—pero bakit may hand to mouth pa?)

Host: What makes your line of bags different from other lines in the market?

Guest: Compared to other bags also on the market, our bags are different because they're something wearable!

(No wonder you look like a—bag!)

Host: Will you introduce our next guest on the show?

Co-host: With honor! Our next guest, please welcome, a standing pillar of the finest cinema! (Ay, standing pillar!)

'Best of Animal Planet'

FROM Dec. 22 to Dec. 26, "The Best of Animal Planet" airs nightly at 10 p.m. Schedule:

Dec. 22, "The Jeff Corwin Experience: Call of the Cajun Wild," an adventure in the backwoods and bayous of Southern Louisiana,

codile Hunter: Journey to the Red Center." Steve and Terri Irwin investigate the harsh outback

interior of central Australia.

'Medley' FESTIVAL Supermall

in Alabang presents these musical treats that comprise its "Christmas Medley" Yuletide treat:

Dec. 20, the internationally acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir in concert at 3 p.m. (20-minute preview) and 7 p.m. (gala performance). Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., more per-

formances by the Loboc Children's choir. Dec. 22 and 23 at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., a musical play for kids, "The Grinchmas," staged by The Works Inc.

Dec. 24, 26, 27, 28 and 30, storytelling

and art workshops.

'Years of Flight'

FROM Dec. 15 to 19 at 10 p.m., the Discovery Channel telecasts "100 Years of Flight."

Daily features: "Extreme Machines: 21st

Century Flight," "The Wright Stuff," "Bog-nor Birdman Competition," and encore presentations of "Superstructures: Boeing 747-400" and "Building the Biggest: Sky Giant."

VIEWFINDER**Nestor U. Torre**

where black bears, armadillos, alligators and rattlesnakes abound.

Dec. 23 "The Planet's Funniest Animals: Episode 18." Hilarious clips from around the world are presented in offbeat features like "Animercials," "Useless Pet Tricks" and "Animail."

At 10:30 p.m., "Episode 36."

Dec. 24, "Run with Lions." Marlice, a white African, explores the land with her native African foster brothers and the pack of lions she grew up with.

Dec. 25, "Supernatural: Outer Limits." On animals' way of warping time.

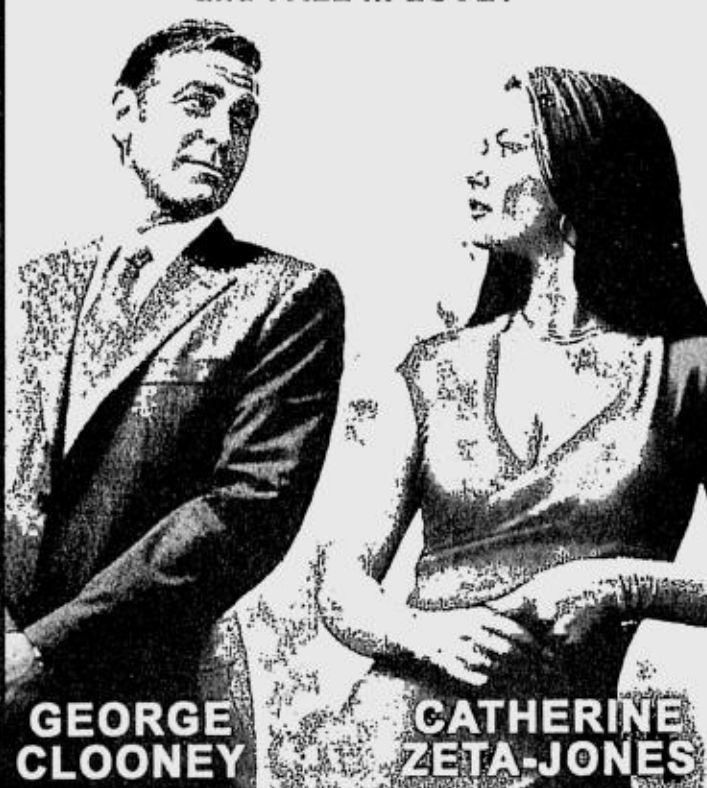
At 10:30 p.m., "Weird Nature: Marvelous Motion." Innovative camera techniques show animals moving in extraordinary ways, like caterpillars turning into wheels.

Dec. 26, "Cro-

VALENTINE IN DECEMBER NOW SHOWING**MATING LABAN 'TO, SINO KAKAMPI MO?**

MTRCB R-13 Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

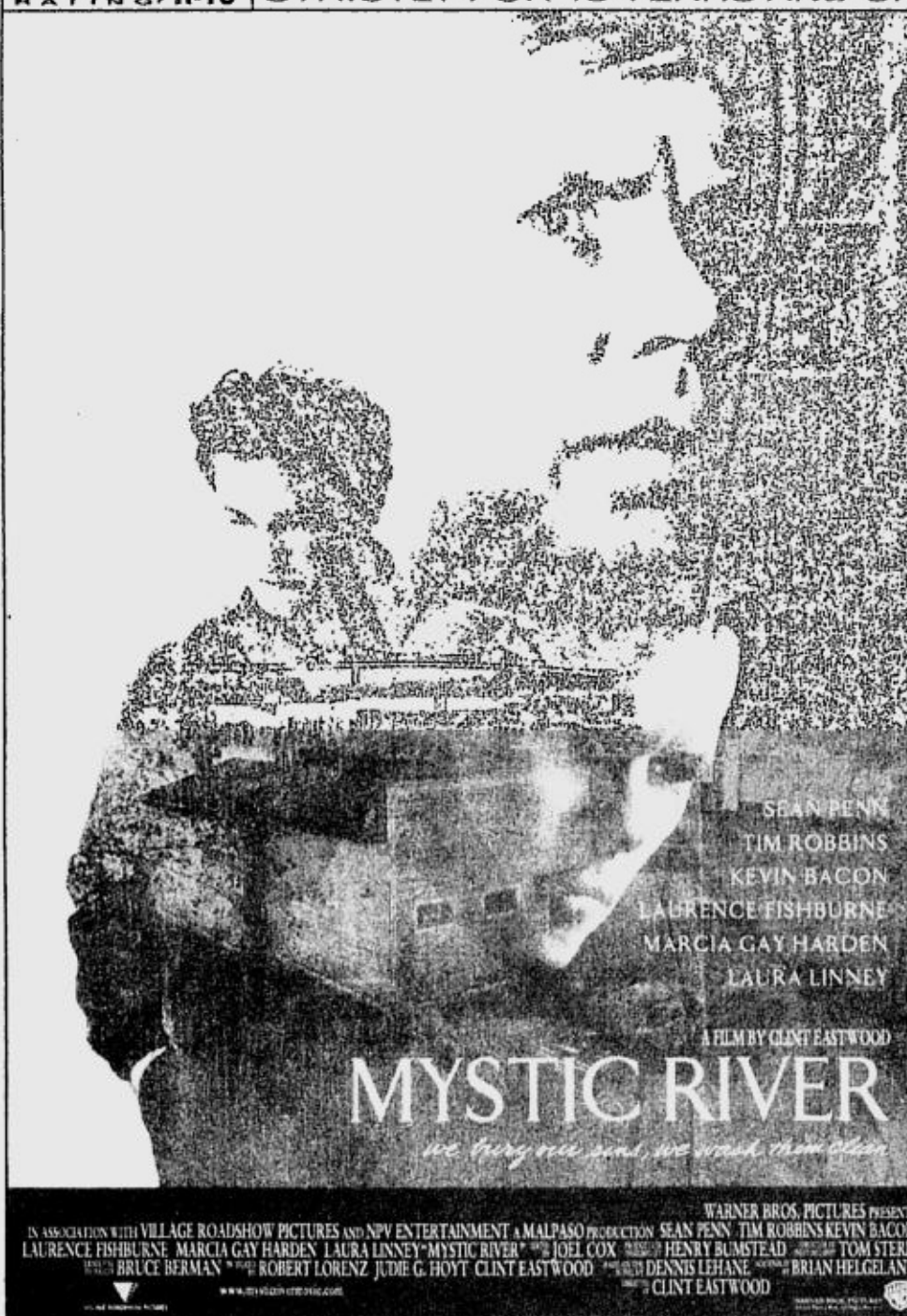
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DIANE LANE

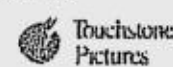
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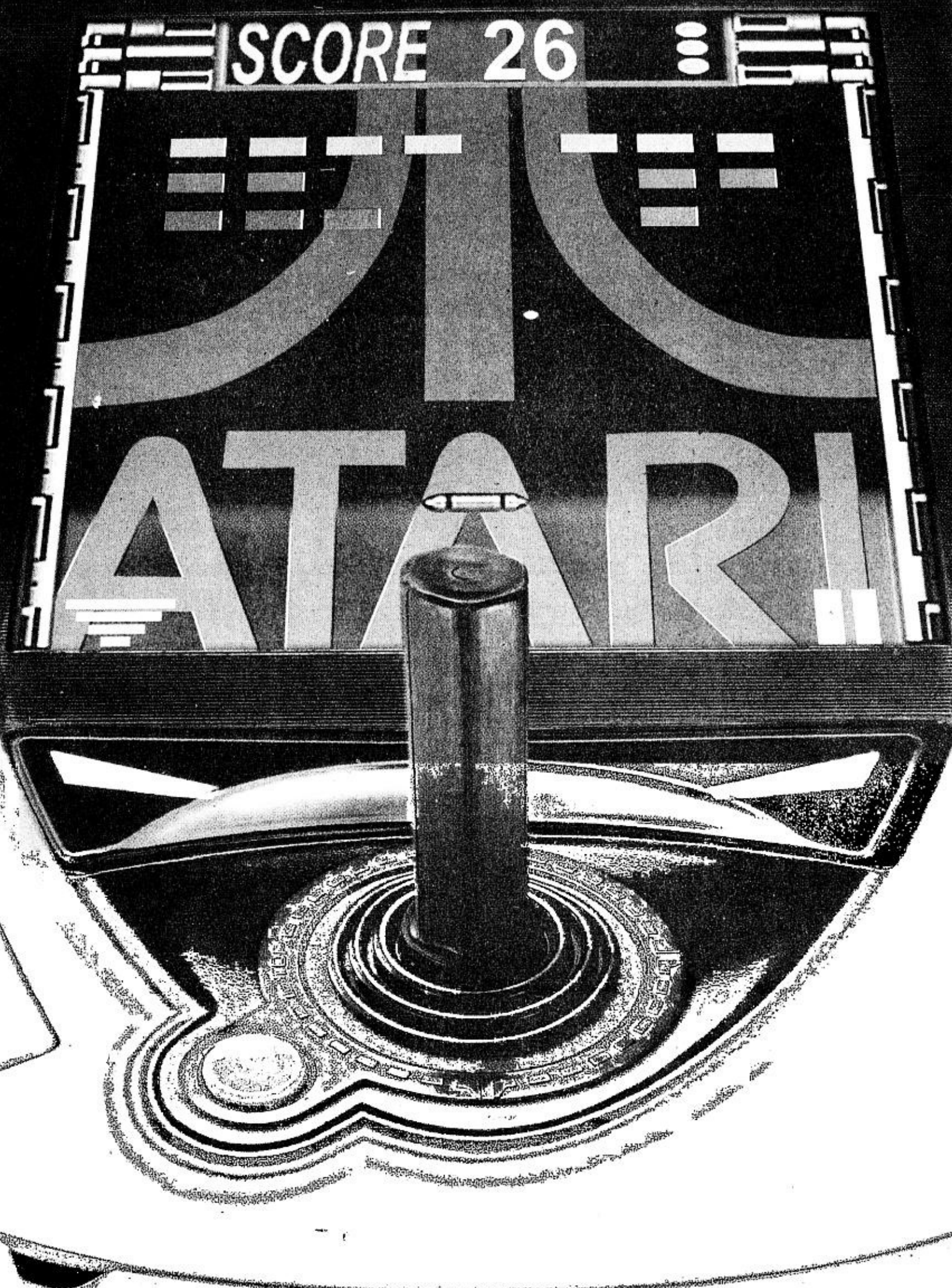
DECEMBER 10

MTRCB Rating: R-13

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WEDNESDAY,
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

E-mail: pb_business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inq7money.net

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

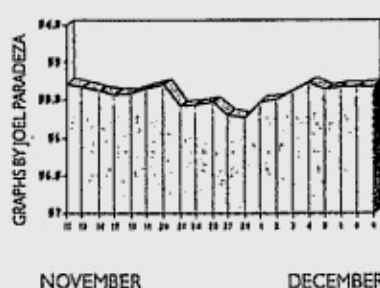
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BIR exceeds November collection goal

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



P 55.315 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 09, 2003

Y 107.19 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 09, 2003

GOLD: \$406.10-406.60

per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 09, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 1.18%

SHARE prices closed 1.18 percent higher yesterday, helped by the overnight upturn on Wall Street and positive local developments for the government on the security front, dealers said. They said sentiment got a boost from Wall Street's rebound while security concerns eased following the arrest of a top rebel leader implicated in the kidnapping of dozens of foreigners in Mindanao.

Positive economic developments such as a better-than-expected economic performance in the third quarter, firmer corporate earnings and a below-ceiling budget deficit for November also buoyed investor confidence.

Dealers expect bargain-hunting to continue as fund managers beef up their stock portfolios ahead of an expected global economic recovery next year but the market will continue to keep a close watch on political developments ahead of the 2004 presidential election.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 15.96 points to 1,365.83 after trading between 1,349.87 and 1,365.83.

Gainers beat losers 46 to 20, with 43 stocks unchanged.

Volume rose to 529.84 million shares worth P654.99 million from 154.76 million shares worth P427.76 million Monday.

The all-shares index was down 4.49 points at 853.37 but the commercial-industrial index gained 23.75 to 2,056.42. Property was up 0.84 at 536.87 and mining rose 12.73 to 1,661.10. Oil was up 0.02 at 1.37 while banking and financial services gained 7.52 to 432.52.

"Wall Street's rally paved the way for some bargain-hunters to take advantage of the lull on the political front," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

"The market is driven by the continued accumulation of telecom stocks," DA Market Securities president Nestor Aguila said.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was top traded, rising P25 to P845 while Globe Telecom gained P15 to P765.

AFP

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR), the government's main tax-collecting agency, yesterday said it overshot its revenue target in November but missed slightly the goal for the first 11 months of the year.

Preliminary figures showed that the BIR collected P42.25 billion in November, 2.3 percent higher than the goal of P41.31 billion for the month, Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said.

Total collections for the first 11 months reached P388.58 billion, 0.22 percent short of the target for the period.

The BIR accounts for more than two-thirds of total government revenue.

"The P42.25-billion collection is the highest of all November collections in the bureau's history. This is the seventh time this year that the BIR was able to exceed its monthly collection goals," Parayno said.

The November BIR effort, however, was artificially boosted by banks' payment of their unpaid gross receipt taxes in 2001 and 2002.

"This good accomplishment was achieved despite the losses in cigarette taxes and the transfer to (the Bureau of Customs) of a large amount of excise taxes on petroleum products," the BIR said in a statement.

With the Customs also exceeding its target collections for the month, the Macapagal administration was likely to have met its revenue goal in November.

The customs agency earlier said its monthly duties collection reached P8.99 billion, or 1.6 percent higher than its target of

P8.84 billion. It said its P100.56 billion target this year was "in the bag."

The BIR said that it was "doing everything to meet its December monthly target," which would allow the government to hit its budget deficit goal of P202 billion this year after breaching three shortfall targets in 2002.

The government earlier said it was confident of meeting its budget deficit target this year, equivalent to 4.7 percent of projected gross domestic product against 5.2 percent in 2002, as it continues to rein in expenditure.

For the first 10 months of the year, the budget shortfall was P163.88 billion versus the target of P171.88 billion.

With the positive revenue picture and a manageable spike in spending, the government is expecting to end the year with a budget deficit of between P195 billion and P200 billion against a

target of P202 billion.

"I think we could end the year with about P200 billion," said Finance Undersecretary Juanita Amatong, the officer in charge of the department.

Parayno said the bureau was still hopeful it could meet the full-year target of P424 billion.

The November figures boosted the government's expectation that the budget gap last month reached only P14 billion against the ceiling of P17.8 billion.

In December, the target is about P12 billion but the budget department said it would exceed expenditures by P5 billion to finance the P5,000 cash gift to public workers.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin earlier said the government likely kept its spending within the ceiling of P72.2 billion last month even as constructive cash or expenditures related to foreign-assisted projects still threatened to bloat expenses.

Vehicle sales jumped 10.03% in first 11 months

By Michelle V. Remo

SALES of motor vehicles climbed 10.03 percent in the first 11 months of the year to 82,815 units from 74,508 units during the same period last year still largely due to the higher sales of commercial vehicles.

According to a joint report from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) and the Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA), year-to-date sales of commercial vehicles increased by 12.49 percent to 62,619 units from 54,797 units last year.

For the month of November alone, sales of commercial vehicles went up by 4.7 percent to 4,310 units from 4,107 units in October. Assemblers said the in-

crease was minimal because of market reaction to the increase in the prices of commercial vehicles following the recent realignment of the auto excise tax.

The increase in sales of commercial vehicles—which include Asian utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, trucks and buses—although relatively small still made the segment capture 75.6 percent of the total vehicle market for the 11-month period.

The industry association said it was expecting higher sales of commercial vehicles in the following months with the introduction of new compact wagon models that were seen to capture big markets.

Sales of Asian utility vehicles rose 12.56 percent in the first 11 months

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BUSINESS

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

STOCKS	(As of December 9, 2003)	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES						
BANKS						
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	2,000	
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44	45.5	44	45.5	159,600	
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	1,800	
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35	35	34.5	35	99,200	
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.54	0.55	22,500,000	
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	27	26	26.5	449,200	
Philippine National Bank	24	24.25	24	24.25	3,000	
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	5,000	
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	8,000	
Security Bank Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	1,000	
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25	25.5	2,900	
FINANCIAL SERVICES						
Manulife Financial Corp.	1735	1735	1735	1735	450	
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	16,000	
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1350	1350	1350	1350	1,210	
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL						
COMMUNICATION						
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	25	25	4,000	
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	320,000	
Globe Telecom Inc.	760	765	760	765	141,520	
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.045	0.045	5,100,000	
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.042	0.038	0.041	30,400,000	
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	15,000	
Philippine Tel. Corp.	0.84	0.85	0.84	0.84	5,400,000	
Phil. Long Dis Tel. Co.	830	845	830	845	177,170	
Vantage Corp.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	270,000	
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	13,100,000	
POWER & ENERGY						
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.75	175,800	
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	1,441,500	
Petrone Corp.	2.16	2.2	2.16	2.2	2,589,000	
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES						
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	0.25	0.27	0.27	0.27	234,000	
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	30,000	
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS						
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	280,000	
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	50,000	
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.08	778,000	
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO						
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	36,000	
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30	30.5	50,100	
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.75	502,500	
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	54.5	54	54.5	29,400	

San Miguel Corp. B	63.5	63.5	63.5	63.5	5,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5	5	4.95	5	15,743,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Ambit Equity Ventures	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	67,000
Ajo Nat Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	14,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	10,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,900
Benares Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	1,050,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.2	970,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	100,000
Flintinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.02	1	1.02	180,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	569,100
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	10,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.065	0.07	0.06	0.07	4,500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	43,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	203,000
Macro Asia Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
Marshall Cons. Inc. A	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	354,000
Magaworld Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	770,000
Meiro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	100,000
Music Corp.	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.16	340,000
Prime Union Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	170,000
South China Resources Inc.	3	3	2.6	2.6	22,000
Tanday Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	22,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Chemical Ind. Of The Phil	35	35	35	35	30,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,900
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	20	20	20	20	17,500
Pureza Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13	13	13	30,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.59	630,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	25.5	25	25	1,478,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series D	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	6,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series A	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Dd	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	1,000
WGA - Preferred	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	30,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5,785,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	20,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.15	11,500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	10,000
Flintinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	3,494,000
Kapitel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	730,000
Premix Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	7,470,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev'l	1	1	1	1	140,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	33,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,650,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,940,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	51,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	9,000,000
Orico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	11,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev'l Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	5,500,000
Philrex Mining Corp. A	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	60,000
Philrex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	140,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	32,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0034	164,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	93,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	800,000

Oil trading firm to list shares

By Doris C. Dumlaog

OIL trading firm Oilink International Corp., a unit of Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc., is set to debut on the Philippine Stock Exchange next year.

Industry sources told the INQUIRER the company planned to offer as much as 33 percent of its total shares to the public and raise more than P200 million to expand its distribution capabilities across the country.

Abacus Capital and Investment Corp. will underwrite the initial public offering.

Oilink, a large oil importer and distributor in the Philippines, posted a 115-percent increase in revenues in the first half of 2003 from a year ago on the back of aggressive sales and marketing efforts. Net sales and services reached P3 billion during the period.

In August, the company began supplying diesel fuel that is 75 percent cleaner compared to what is usually sold in the market. This clean diesel is the first step of its compliance with the

Clean Air Act's diesel requirements, which will take effect this January.

The new diesel product uses sulfur content which is 0.20 percent to 0.05 percent lower and a higher Cetane Index from 52 to 54. These characteristics prevent over-fueling, thereby, reducing the emission of black exhaust smoke from the diesel engine. These features also give the engine better combustion, improved efficiency and better fuel economy.

Being an oil importer allows Oilink to source for products at competitive prices from the world-class refineries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Unioil group, which is engaged in the downstream petroleum industry, has been supplying petroleum products for both automotive and industrial use in the Philippines since 1996.

The government has been prodding big oil players in the country—Caltex Philippines and Pilipinas Shell—to likewise list on the PSE to comply with the requirements of the oil deregulation law.

CURRENCIES

December 9, 2003	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.818197	1.000000	55.323000
Japan	Yen	0.007626	0.009320	0.515600
United Kingdom	Pound	1.418835	1.734100	95.935600
Hongkong	Dollar	0.105386	0.128803	7.125800
Switzerland	Franc	0.645724	0.789204	43.611100
Canada	Dollar	0.6304	0.770475	42.625000
Singapore	Dollar	0.477919	0.584112	32.314800
Australia	Dollar	0.605443	0.738973	40.937500
Bahrain	Dinar	2.170398	2.652661	146.753200
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.21818	0.266660	14.752400
Brunei	Dollar	0.476527	0.582411	32.220700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020527	0.025088	1.387900
UAE	Dirham	0.222778	0.272779	15.063300
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.222200	67.615800
Argentina	Peso	0.273416	0.334169	18.487200
Brazil	Real	0.278393	0.340252	18.823800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134345	0.164196	9.083800
India	Rupee	0.017978	0.021973	1.215600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215344	0.263193	14.560600
Mexico	New Peso	0.08911	0.08911	4.929900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.529201	0.646789	35.782300
Norway	Kroner	0.123111	0.150466	8.324200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014284	0.017458	0.965800
South Africa	Rand	0.126793	0.154967	8.573200
Korea	Won	0.00069	0.000843	0.046600
Sweden	Kroner	0.111906	0.136771	7.566600
Syria	Pound	0.018646	0.022789	1.260800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.0241	0.029455	1.629500
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000513	0.000627	0.034700

DISCLOSURES

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. bought 37,000 of its own shares at P1.90 per share.

AYALA Land Inc. declared a cash dividend of P0.03 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Dec. 23 and will be payable on Jan. 16. The company scheduled its annual stockholders' meeting on March 24 after the board approved the change in its by-laws moving its annual meeting from April to March.

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 11,500 of its own shares at P1.32 per share.

GLOBE Telecom Inc. will reduce its number of directors from 15 to 11. Its annual stockholders' meeting will be held on March 22.

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. announced the election of Bienvenido Tantoco Sr. as regular director of the bank following his resignation as independent director. Marcelo Dy resigned as corporate secretary while Samuel Torres was elected to replace him.

BANK of the Philippine Islands declared a cash dividend of P0.80 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Dec. 23 and will be payable on Jan. 7.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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Jupiter makeover

ALARMED by the dwindling business of Jupiter Street restaurants and bars, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay is now planning to redevelop the food street into something like what Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte has done to revive Tomas Morato Avenue.

According to the grapevine, Binay plans to enlarge the sidewalks of Jupiter, light it up and line it with trees to make the strip pedestrian-friendly, and convert the strip's clogged section from Nicanor Garcia (the former Reposo) to Makati Ave. into a one-way street.

And since parking in the area is a problem even after office-hours, City Hall also plans to ask the Buendia-side building owners to allow, subject to additional security measures, night pay-parking in their back lots.

According to the grapevine, City Hall architectural/urban planning consultants Nathaniel

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



von Einsiedel and Felino Palafox have already submitted redevelopment schemes for Jupiter along those lines. Preliminary construction work could start as early as the first quarter of next year to take advantage of the dry months.

Barangay Bel-Air chair Constancia Lichauco, who is generally supportive of the plan, cautioned that Jupiter is still a private street—Bel-Air subdivision still owns the road, despite it now being opened to public use—whose utilities and drainage had been designed for residential use.

COCKTALES/B4

AUCTION SALE				
The following real estate properties at Savvy 25, Sucat, Parañaque City, will be sold to the highest bidders in an Auction on an "As-is-where-is" basis				
LOT #	PRICE	AREA	50% DISCOUNT	
Block 1	4-A P 5,000.00	120 sqm	300,000.00	Lot Only
26-B	P 6,000.00	131 sqm	393,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2-BR / 1-T&B
Block 2	10-B P 6,000.00	114 sqm	342,000.00	Lot Only
12	P 6,000.00	228 sqm	684,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2-BR / 1-T&B
15-A	P 6,000.00	114 sqm	342,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2-BR / 1-T&B
16-A	P 6,000.00	114 sqm	342,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2-BR / 1-T&B
29-A	P 6,500.00	114 sqm	370,500.00	w/ House-2 story 2-Bedroom
Block 3	16 P 6,500.00	216 sqm	702,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2-BR
24	P 6,500.00	216 sqm	702,000.00	w/ House-2 story 2-BR
Block 4	3 P 6,500.00	123 sqm	399,750.00	Lot Only
Block 12	9-A P 6,500.00	108 sqm	351,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow
Block 14	9 P 6,000.00	166 sqm	498,000.00	w/ House-Bungalow 2BR

SEALED BIDS will be accepted at Unit 8, Hernandez Townhomes, 56 Hernandez Avenue, Pasay City. Deadline for submission of bids is on Friday, Dec. 12, 2003, 5:00 p.m. Bidders should bring P 5,000.00 cash or MC with their BIDS. Upon approval of a bid, bidder may not withdraw his bid. Call 834-8849 to 41 or 0916-3768361 for details

Vehicle...

From page B1

of the year to 38,628 units from 33,775 units during the same period last year.

Light commercial vehicles also posted higher sales of 20,991 units during the period, or 13.06 percent higher than the 18,248 recorded last year.

Sales of light trucks also increased by 12.22 percent in the first 11 months of the year to 2,512 units from 2,204 units during the same period last year.

Combined sales of trucks and buses, on the other hand, declined by 14.38 percent to 488 units from 570 units last year.

Passenger car sales, on the other hand, rose 2.4 percent in the 11-month period to 20,196 units from 19,711 units last year. On a month-on-month basis, however, sales went down 13.9 percent to 2,550 units in November from 2,961 units in October.



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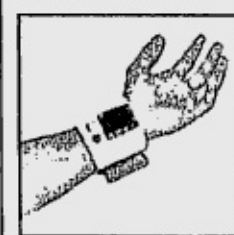
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RETAIL T-BOND ISSUES

Gov't cash position at P90B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration's cash position was placed at P90 billion as of this week owing largely to the proceeds of retail treasury bonds issued a week ago.

Despite this, the government said it would continue tapping local and foreign funds for the payment of huge maturing obligations in 2004.

In the offing, according to officials, is an auction of zero coupon bonds worth P5 billion next week. The bonds will be issued in behalf of a government corporation while selling more RTBs to government firms are also being considered.

The government said it had sold P31.08 billion in RTBs last week, which boosted the cash hoard from

P62 billion to more than P90 billion.

The zero coupon bonds will mature in seven years. The issue is expected to generate P3.5 billion. A \$750-million, long-term global bond issue in January is also in the works.

Next year, the government will have to settle P542.2 billion in debts, up P116.5 billion or 27.4 percent from P425.7 billion this year. Interest payments of P271.5 billion in 2004 will be P40.8 billion or 17.7 percent more than the P230.7 billion this year, while principal payments are expected to go up by 38.8 percent or P75.7 billion to P270.7 billion from P195 billion in 2003.

For this month, the government has to settle about P22 billion in maturing bills and bonds. By yearend, the government's cash position is seen to drop to about P40 billion be-

cause of debt service.

The Philippines is Asia's largest sovereign debt issuer, aside from Japan. It had raised \$1.05 billion from the sale of 10 and 22-year global bonds in October and another \$250 million from the issuance of three-year fixed notes in November.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said it would still make sense to raise the foreign funding requirement of the government ahead of the May elections, when investors were expected to seek higher premium.

Political uncertainties this year are already pushing investors to seek higher returns for their placements in government securities. Investors believed that existing returns were insufficient to cover the risks of placing money in Philippine debt papers.

PNOC-EDC to tap JBIC funding

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Energy Development Corp. is seeking the go-ahead of the National Economic and Development Authority to tap the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to fund a \$120-million geothermal project in Southern Leyte.

PNOC-EDC president and chief executive Sergio F. Apostol said in an interview that the amount would cover the development of a steam field and a 60-megawatt power plant.

"We could export electricity from this power plant to Cebu and Bohol. By the time we have built the facility, we expect the capacity of our inter-island transmission lines to have improved," Apostol said.

The proposed project will take about four years to complete from financial closing.

Also, Apostol said PNOC-EDC had committed to energize 827 more remote barangays and sitios in the next three years under the Department of Energy's expanded electrification program.

The barangays are located in the provinces of Leyte, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental,

Albay, Sorsogon and Cotabato. These are provinces that host PNOC-EDC's geothermal projects. It also committed to energize remote barangays in Samar and Iloilo.

Government estimates show that providing electricity to a barangay costs between P1 million and P1.3 million.

"We will continue to help the DOE achieve its rural electrification targets to ensure that communities will reap the benefits of electricity," Apostol said.

He added that after posting P249.2 million in revenues from overseas drilling projects in 2002, PNOC-EDC was bidding for more contracts in a bid to strengthen its hold in the global drilling industry.

Apostol said the firm was expected to bag a new contract for drilling rig maintenance with Bangladesh Petroleum and Exploration Co. after the completion of an earlier contract with the South Asian firm.

Philippine National Oil Co.'s biggest-earning subsidiary will also bid for the drilling of oil and gas wells, which are projects of Bangladesh Gas Field Co. Ltd.

RP reelected to FAO Council

THE PHILIPPINES' reelection to the policy-making body of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is expected to provide the country a stronger pitch in pushing for reforms in the World Trade Organization.

The 16-member FAO is in charge of drafting world policies in reducing hunger and poverty. It is the country's second consecutive year in the council.

"Among the 187 member-countries of the UN-FAO, the Philippines was selected (as one of the 16 members of the council) for its consistent and active participation in FAO activities," Agriculture Assistant Secretary Sifredo Serrano added.

Serrano said that Agriculture Secretary Luis R. Lorenzo Jr., addressing the 32nd UN-FAO Conference in Rome, Italy, that started last week, had called on the body to look into the "unfairness" of the rules governing members of the World Trade Organization.

"The developing countries' competitiveness has been unduly prejudiced by the unfairness of the WTO agreement on Agriculture, which has been under negotiation since year 2000," Lorenzo said earlier.

He also pointed out that the Philippines and other developing countries could not raise the necessary financing to curb hunger and malnutrition in their respective countries because their funds were eaten up by farm subsidies.

"The secretary asked the FAO Council to widen its technical assistance for developing countries to help them prepare for bilateral trade negotiations," Serrano said. *Christine A. Gaylican*

Cocktales

From page B3

The redevelopment hopes to induce the substantial Buendia office crowd and the Salcedo Village condo and Bel Air Village residents to walk over and resume patronizing the Jupiter establishments, which have lost substantial business to Rockwell and the new, larger Greenbelt.

With cheaper rents than the mall-based competition that they can pass on to lower food and drinks tab, the Jupiter establishments think they can bring back the old sizzle of the place.

Side Dish

AND speaking of Rockwell, even the crowd-drawing Dish is grumbling about dwindling patronage in the high-end mall, now that the new Greenbelt is siphoning the same set of spenders.

Dish, for the provincianos and foreign-based readers, is a cluster of restaurants/bars that share a common dining and entertainment area within the Rockwell mall. At its heyday, Dish was the party place to go to at certain nights, depending on which bands were playing.

According to the grapevine, Dish manager EJ Litton, on behalf of his principals, has already told Rockwell about their plan to give up the dining area space to reduce rent by about P400,000 a month.

Failing to win that, Dish is considering transferring to another Lopez-owned property, the ABS-CBN perimeter "mall," in middle class-rich section of Quezon City.

RCBC departures

WHAT is happening at RCBC?

Not only is the Yuchengco bank losing its treasury chief, Jaime Panganiban, but its chief risk officer, Jorge Payawal, is also leaving by yearend.

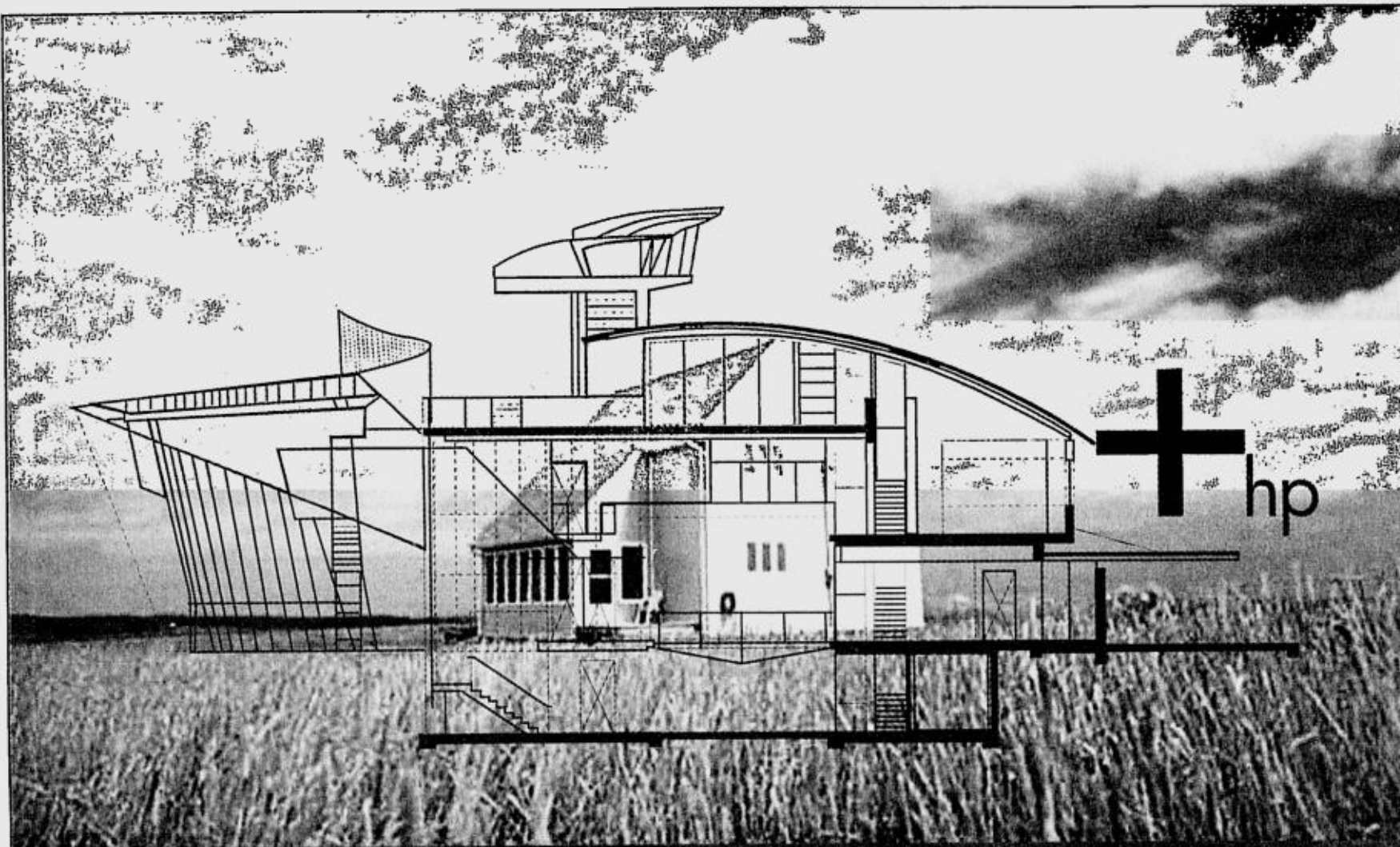
According to the grapevine, Payawal, who had previously been prevailed upon to stay on, has finally decided to accept a regional job offer.

Both Panganiban (the architect of the controversial Peace bonds and the money-spinning RCBC leveraged bonds) and Payawal hold executive vice president titles, two of RCBC's six such EVPs.

So, in addition to a president, RCBC has job openings for two senior positions as well.

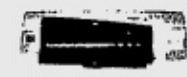
Heard through the grapevine

THE HANDLERS of Mike Arroyo think that Bettina Lopez-Osmeña, the wife of Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, is the real reason why the gentleman from Cebu is so hot in pursuing the Jose Pidal investigation against Arroyo's brother Iggy. (Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)



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• HP Designjet 500 106.68cm(42") (SRP PhP160,000) Rebate value: PhP6,000
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3569, Series of 2003.

"We are finding out whether we will need the approval of the National Economic Development Authority to negotiate," the official said. "Whatever the case, we will form a team

In a related matter, Napocor has called for proposals from power companies on the lease of power generating sets that would be used to address creeping electricity shortages in the islands of Panay, Mindoro and Palawan.

dent Rogelio M. Murga said Napocor was studying the possibility of pulling out the power barges now based in Puerto Princesa in Palawan and Calapan in Mindoro Oriental and replace it with land-based gas turbines.

PNB expected to post P44M in losses in Oct.

PNB officials recognized that the bank's NPL problem remained its biggest challenge. This year, the bank must sell some P2 billion worth of foreclosed assets and possibly even its soured loans.

Kepeco unit to secure ECC

According to the group, this is more than enough potential to deal with the current 55-MW shortfall in electricity supply. **Rommel W. Domingo**

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PEOPLE *at* WORK

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Pinoy game developers enter fascinating world of video games

By Candy G. Villanueva

THE DENSE forest was dark and foreboding. In the tangle of thickets, lurked several creatures you hope you would never encounter, not even in your dreams. This is not the set of the latest J.R.R. Tolkien movie. This is the troubled land of Maroka created by the imaginative minds of young Pinoy game developers of Anino Entertainment.

A game developer (GD) is one who creates a video game and may have one or more positions or areas of expertise including programming, story writing, level design, character animation and composing music. Considering the scope of the work involved, game development is never a one-man team.

Anino Entertainment is in the business of game development. Recently, they developed a PC Role Playing Game (RPG) called Anito: Defend a

ALL ABOUT WORK



Land Enraged. Heading the small but dynamic team of Anino Entertainment is Niel Dagondon. With only two programmers, two artists, little resources, no experience and a whole lot of determination, imagination and ambition, Anino Entertainment was able to create a single-player adventure RPG that boasts of innovative 3D graphics engine, two unique story lines, 200 characters and creatures, engaging battle scenes and problem solving.

Components of job

A game designer is tasked with making the design document of the game. "I make sure that everyone on the team understands the vision

of the game. Ultimately, I define what the game is supposed to be and what it's not supposed to be," Dagondon claims.

The team head coordinates everyone's efforts. "I make sure that the time lines are being followed, and generally do what needs to be done to get the production rolling. I am in charge of approving everyone's work: Is the design ok? Is the character too fat? Are there too many levels being designed?"

With the development job also comes programming. Acting also as lead programmer, Dagondon is responsible for the architectural flow of Anito's program. The programmer also decides what data files are needed and what graphics and AI (Artificial Intelligence) modules need to be done. "I then split the job between me and our other programmer, and make sure that the modules I allocate are working fine with each other. I also do code quality check for the other programmer."

Training

A game developer can develop a game even without professional experience or schooling. A computer science or any computer related course would be a plus for a developer. "Since game development is something not really taught in schools, what is really important is that you start to build games (or game components) as a hobby as early as possible," Dagondon advises.

If you want to get into the nitty-gritty of game design, programming languages to learn are C, C++, C#. A good designer must be well versed with the concepts of 3D,



DAGONDON (third from left) with Anino game developers

PHOTO BY CANDY G. VILLANUEVA

physics, scripting, File manipulation. Dagondon recommends "Tricks of the Windows Game Programming Gurus" by Andre Lamothe to read. Technologies to learn are Open GL and Direct X (or whatever platform you want to use according to Dagondon). Software would include Visual C, Photoshop, and 3D Max.

Over and above the list of skills or requirements to be a game developer is love. "A game developer is first and foremost a game lover. It's almost impossible for a game developer not to love his or her job. Passion is a primary requirement for being a developer," reveals Dagondon.

Fast moving field

Game development is a

high-tech, fast moving industry. Just when you're starting to get used to the newest release, another version will come out. Constant research and updates on the latest video card or implementing new AI techniques, for example, are vital to the business.

In addition, Dagondon claims that there is always room for innovation in game development. "There is a saying in our industry that making a game is like reinventing the wheel. More often than not, you will be building a game either from the ground up or the waist up. Since no two games are alike, the new features you would have to develop and combine make your game uniquely your game."

Thus, making a game is also very unpredictable, as you are always mapping out new ground, you do not know when the next road bump may come from."

Grossing over \$40 billion, the game industry is considered as one of the largest in the entertainment business. Game development is centered in most advanced countries like US, Korea, Japan and UK. "It's a shame almost none of that money goes our country's way," Dagondon says. "As such, we are visualizing a scenario where we can market the Philippines as a viable place from where we can export the games, or certain game components, as local development cost would be much lower here."



AN ORDINARY office in the extraordinary world of video games

PHOTO BY CANDY G. VILLANUEVA

Oh, the places you can go

WHEN we took up the advocacy for work-life balance, we didn't quite know where it would take us.

No one could have prepared us for the double surprise of the past week: we found ourselves speaking before an audience of two thousand and, the most wonderful surprise of all, in the home of a genteel lady who paints, plays the cello, dances, cooks a mean Bicol Express, and lives the dream of a balanced life.

We were in Legaspi City, Albay, where Mayon volcano looms so beautifully (it's so much more majestic and captivating than in photos!) and where more than a thousand certified public accountants gathered together for the annual PICPA convention. We were invited as a team of three speakers representing PDI's People At Work to talk about the different ways we can bring passion back into our work lives.

Rekindling passion

Reggie Reyes, editor of People At Work, opened with a thought-provoking workshop on rediscovering where your passion lies—that area where your most desired personal interest merges with what you do at work. Taking the audience through exercises that helped them discover what aspects of work and their personal lives they get excited about, Reggie put the delegates on the road to discernment. Sometimes, she said, you have to make the painful decision of leaving the comfort and security of what you do halfheartedly to jump into an unknown career path where your true passion lies. It is when we discover this happy path that a myriad of opportunities open to us, many of which we may not anticipate. When we find our true calling, the passion in our

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara



work, we are given the opportunity to be greater than ourselves.

Working moms have a gut feel for what will really make us happy. We often, however, don't have the courage to go for it. But several people in the audience shared their leap of faith. One accountant dropped out of a successful career to go into orchid growing. She started with one pot and has since expanded to 12 hectares of orchid farms! She followed her bliss and found success. Ask yourself today: are you following your bliss?

Harnessing creativity

Teresa Reyes Tunay, editor in chief of Blue Collar magazine, enthralled PICPA delegates with her stories of how even the most ordinary people can tap into their creative powers. She said, putting life back into our work could mean simply rekindling the creativity we all have within ourselves. We are all born creative but not all of us give our spirit the opportunity to bloom. Teresa suggested that by actively cultivating our creativity, our work would be transformed from humdrum to wow.

I particularly loved one idea she presented, a tool that working moms can take advantage of: she suggested keeping an ideas journal. Jot down your ideas, big or small, as they occur to you. Have a little notebook in your bag to record them in. By training yourself to be so aware of inspiration as it fleets and

floats into our lives, we will be able to unleash the power of creativity.

Striving for balance

I spoke about the delicate balance required if you want to advance in your work without leaving your family behind. In particular, we discussed the phenomenon of the zigzag career: the deliberate shift from high to low gear in our career so that we can devote time for our family, and the shift back from low to high gear in our career when the kids are older and less dependent on us. By plotting out a zigzag career path instead of a career path that bulldozes forward at all cost, the working mom is able to get more out of life.

Living it

Our journey came full circle in the home of Dehlia Napay-Resbustillo. Even as we preached about passion, creativity, and balance, she lived it. After raising a brood of five kids—all grown up now, some with children of their own—she's thrown herself into pursuing her passions. She oil paints: jars with paint brushes line the stairs leading up to an upstairs hallway where she keeps her finished works, canvas after canvas of enchanting episodes in the legend of Mayon. She dances: choreographing traditional Philippine dances, chasing after authentic music and steps to give life to the rhythm she feels inside. She plays the cello: in her bedroom, a cello waits beside her dresser, anticipating the moment she will make her strings weep for joy.

Best of all, she tells stories: inspiring stories that humble and give hope to those of us who dream of more—more places to go before we sleep.

What are the major reasons for business failure?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner



DEAR WW: I'm thinking about buying a printing business. The business has been doing well. It does good work and has a base of loyal customers. But I worry about the kinds of stuff that could derail it in the future.

A Bad Idea?

I once cast my vote in a column for the goofiest product idea ever. Of all the questionable products actually brought to market, my favorite, I said, was edible deodorant. (It just gives too much new meaning to Old Spice.) But now I have to report that I have a new one. I just read about Snif-T-Panties. Yup, you got it: women's underwear that smells like bananas, popcorn, whiskey or pizza.

Business issues

Well, it's probably no surprise that Snif-T-Panties haven't met with a whiff of success. Having a sensible product matters. But you're right that even the best product won't guarantee a company's success. The issues below, if mishandled, can spell death for any business. For more, check out the "Small Business Sourcebook" by Hausman and Cross (Times Books, 1998).

Do you have enough cash? To quote the finance professor in my MBA program, "cash flow is more important than your mother." Sorry, Mom, but it's true. For every "dot com" that's

spending venture capital like Monopoly money, there are thousands of others that die for lack of cash.

Does the business keep up with its competitors? You know the old expression, "keep your friends close and your enemies even closer?" It's nowhere more true than in business. Have you visited the business's major competitors? Followed them in the press? Talked to their customers? Visited their web site? Does your business offer customers something that's different and better in at least one significant, easy-to-communicate way?

Meeting change

Does the business keep up with its changing market? Peter Drucker once said, "Whom the gods want to destroy, they send forty years of success." He's right. Nothing is more dangerous than complacency. Constantly anticipate your customers' changing needs, or your business is doomed to fail.

Are you prepared to get outside help? The days of the all-purpose CEO are over. Business is too tough, and the changes too fast, for one person to know all the answers. So, focus on what you do best and build a network of experts to help you do the rest.

Fast company

Can you move as fast as today's business climate requires? The days of slow decisions are also gone. I talked to an executive recently who'd wanted to hire a hot employee. Three months later,



ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

HR gave its OK. "Great," she said, "you're only two months and twenty-three days too late."

Whenever you examine a business opportunity, you need to sniff around on two fronts. First, you want to examine the business and make sure it's up to snuff. Then you want to examine your own "executive tendencies" to make sure you've got the stuff. Otherwise you just could lose your underwear on the deal. (Of course, if you do, I know someone with a warehouse full of panties...)

Poll results

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABC-news.com poll: This week's Working Wounded poll question: What is the main reason a business fails?

—It's the deficient product, 16.4%

—It's that they're too stupid, 40.2%

—It's the lack of money, 43.2%
(Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

Int'l exam opens windows for Filipino CPAs in global posts

By Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon

LEGASPI CITY—The recently concluded 57th PICPA (Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants) National Convention held on Nov. 26 to 29 at the Albay Astrodome here unveiled a serious concern, which if properly addressed by the government, could pave the way to vast opportunities for a lot of Filipino accountants seeking work in any accounting firm anywhere in the globe.

This surfaced in an interview with two PICPA international awardees: Romy de Guzman, president of PICPA Los Angeles Chapter and consultant of the LA Citizens Crime Commission, and Simeon N. Orejudos, a private CPA practitioner in California and founder of the very first PICPA international chapter based in San Francisco, California.

De Guzman and Orejudos came all the way from the US to receive the awards.

The two CPAs were recognized for their special achievements. De Guzman was cited for International Professional Development while Orejudos, as Outstanding PICPA member in International Affairs.

Another US-based Filipino PICPA awardee, Rolan L. Ditan, president of the PICPA California, failed to come and personally receive his award for International Professional Development.

Opportunities

These three professionals received awards for having rallied the country's accountants and even tending to some flocks of certified public accountants in their respective areas abroad.

These opportunities would be offered through the International Qualification Appraisal

Board (IQAB) and the International Qualifying Exam or IQEx.

Taking of the IQEx of the Filipino CPAs has been approved by the US government in terms of compliance to certain requirements by Filipino CPAs.

Recent development has it that the National Economic and Development Authority already made a commitment in a meeting of DeGuzman and Orejudos with representatives from the NEDA and the Philippine Regulation Commission.

This development is seen to make a breakthrough not only in the history of PICPA but also in the country's economy. The IQEx determines the candidate's knowledge of US generally accepted accounting principles, generally accepted auditing standards, taxation and business law.

The objective of IQEx is to assess the candidate's knowledge of a subject in which there are differences between the US and foreign accountancy principles.

Most IQEx subjects are in major areas of dissimilarity, such as professional and legal responsibilities, business law and taxation.

Unlike the uniform CPA exams, there is only one IQEx grade for the entire examination.

US license

Being the PICPA LA chapter president, De Guzman was able to help their members get license in the State of Texas, the only state in the US recognizing Filipino CPAs.

"Because of this, we saw a window of opportunities to have Filipino accountants be certified in the said state, and that they did it. That's why I gave them (Texas government) award for helping the Filipinos get their license," he said, adding that they are also doing the same for California and all of the 54 states in the

US, simultaneously.

De Guzman said he has a one-on-one communication with the Texas State of Public Accountancy and does review and recommendations for those willing to be CPAs in that state. The approval of license in Texas usually takes 30 to 60 days only.

At present, they are expecting about 50 Filipino applicants to be licensed in a couple of months.

This initiative inspired the PICPA awards board to recognize De Guzman in the 57th PICPA convention.

De Guzman and Orejudos said there are about six organizations of Filipino accountants in the US. Only their chapter in Los Angeles has affiliation and accreditation with RP's PICPA.

Discrimination

"Filipino CPAs actually scare US accountants because we are taking their jobs," said De Guzman. According to him, after the dieticians and other dignified professional Filipinos in the US, CPAs nowadays are the ones experiencing discrimination.

"In one occasion, I even challenged an officemate looking down on us to try taking the CPA exam in the Philippines," he recalled, relating how Filipinos are looked down despite their potential and ability to compete in the international workplace.

Orejudos, who has his own accounting firm in Daly City, revealed the Philippines CPAs in California, under Rule 21.5, must be evaluated by the "American Institute of CPAs" or the "International Research Foundation Inc." to determine that their degree obtained in a foreign country is equivalent to an American Bachelor's degree.

At that time, the California State Board of Accountancy (CSBA) had only accredited

graduates of four Philippine universities: University of the East, University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas and Far Eastern University.

As a result, he narrated, most of those who applied under Rule 21.5 and under section 5087 of the California Accountancy Act who are Philippine CPAs with audit experience in an accounting firm were given California CPA certificates.

In 1978, Orejudos said, the CSBA initiated a revision of Section 5087 to eliminate applicants from a "foreign country," which was approved by the California Assembly effective 1981.

As a result of this revision, the only applicants for CPA license by reciprocity are those who passed the uniform CPA examination and licensed as CPAs from other states in the US and Trust Territories.

Alternative measure

With this problem, De Guzman and Orejudos' group came up with the IQEx, which they believed will be easily passed by Filipino CPAs and will put to shame the international firms fond of looking down on them.

"With this International qualifying examination, he said, we will be able to raise the bar for the Filipinos to give them access all over the globe," De Guzman said.

Foreign accountants who are licensed in the Philippines and regular member in the good standing of the various PICPA chapters, including international chapters seeking CPA certificate in any state in the US, can now take the International Qualification Uniform CPA Examination (also known as IQEx).

De Guzman and Orejudos said that during the meeting of the CSBA board members in South-



Los Angeles-based Romy de Guzman and Simeon Orejudos show their individual awards, for international professional development and for international affiliate, respectively, during the 57th PICPA confab held in the Albay Astrodome, Legaspi City.

PHOTO BY RONNIE LOREJO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON

ern California last March 22, the application of PICPA to join the International Qualification Appraisal Board (IQAB) was approved and jointly established by the National Association of State Boards and the American Institute of Public Accountants to conduct a four-and-a-half-hour IQEx.

The PICPA California Chapter under the leadership of Rolan Ditan pushed for this.

2004 global PICPA confab

This is a good sign for the upcoming first PICPA Global Convention, which will be held on Oct. 20 to 24 next year in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, De Guzman said.

With the changing trend, manner and procedure of the PICPA examinations starting 2004 and the new requirements on the Code of Professional Ethics, the globalization of professionalism is here.

And it calls for the recognition of all accountants in the world after De Guzman and company finally proved that CPA reciprocity or equality is just proper and well earned by all Filipino CPAs, based on the compatibility of the 3 Es: education, examination and experience.

In addition to the experience requirements, applicants must take courses in taxation and business law in any community colleges, and must pass an open book examination in pro-

fessional ethics, Orejudos said.

"Now all we need is our Filipino government's international commitment to the accounting profession based on the General Agreement on Trade-In Services (GATS)," De Guzman pointed out, saying that the Philippine government has been informed of this concern since March of this year.

He and Orejudos said this hurdle, if attained, will pave the way to the formal recognition of all Filipino CPAs, to practice future accounting generation of Filipino CPAs, to practice their professions in the 54 licensing jurisdictions in the USA, and thus, opening the road to more opportunities for them.

"CPA licensing by reciprocity under IQEx is the only means for foreign CPAs and chartered accountants to apply for CPA license in all states of the USA and its trust territories," Orejudos said.

He explained that this is one of the foremost objectives of the PICPA IA Regional Council, aside from serving as the link for all Filipino CPAs with the formation of new chapters in all parts of the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe and the establishment of a PICPA foundation.

This foundation will be the financial arm of all PICPA IA chapters all over the world.

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

Rewarding employees effectively is like ordering coffee



By Peter Paul V. Cauton

CHOICE. In the movie "You've Got Mail," Tom Hanks says this is one reason why it's fun to order coffee at a nearby Starbucks outlet: the plethora of choices. Hot or cold? Tall, grande or venti? With or without whipped cream? Regular or non-fat? Caffeinated or decaffeinated? The process is decidedly empowering, plus you do get exactly the type of drink you want.

The same principle is involved when one talks about "flexible benefits," the latest item to hit the human resource compensation "menu." Popularly known as the cafeteria plan, a flexible benefits program entails giving employees the power of choice when it comes to their benefit packages. First, the company determines a benefits budget for each employee. Then, instead of dictating what benefit items this budget would be allotted to, the company empowers employees to choose their own benefit items. The result then is a veritable bene-

fit buffet table where employees can choose whatever items tickle their fancy. This deviates from the traditional benefits package where a common list of items is given to all employees.

While a seemingly new trend in rewards management, flexible benefits programs have actually been around since the 1970's. In 2000, approximately 40% of employers in the United States had employed a flexible benefits program. While there has been a notable number of Philippine companies that have recently implemented such a program, flexible benefits plans have yet to garner widespread use in the Philippines.

Advantages

In September of 2001, my company, Soluziona, a Spanish IT and management consulting firm, cautiously migrated to a flexible benefits scheme. Let me now share with you the advantages of having a flexible benefit system derived from my three-

year experience in delivering the program.

The most obvious advantage is that employees get to customize their packages in accordance with their own needs and contexts. You have a wife and three kids? Maybe it will be good to get health cards for your entire family, an educational plan for your children, and more paid leaves to ensure quality time. Are you a 28 year-old bachelor? Maybe that gym benefit would be attractive to you, together with that cellular phone plan. The variations are endless.

Moreover, precisely because of the customization process, a company's benefit investment is optimized. The traditional set-up presupposes that company-offered benefits are needed and therefore utilized by all. Of course, this isn't necessarily the case. The result? An unused benefit item, which the company nevertheless pays for. A flexible benefits scheme reduces these types of incidences

from happening, ensuring that a company optimizes every centavo it allocates to its benefits.

It is also much easier for a company in a flexible setup to add new benefits to their program. For a company in a traditional set-up, adding a benefit would mean automatic costs, as all employees should be able to avail of the benefit. But additional item/s to a flexible benefit scheme should mean little, or more commonly no change at all, in terms of costs.

Another advantage would be an increased awareness of employees towards benefits. Since employees are co-designers of their own benefit packages, their overall awareness of company benefit policies, procedures, and programs, are very much heightened.

To be continued next week
(The author, Peter Paul V. Cauton, is the human resources executive of the Philippine operations of Soluziona, a Spanish IT and management consulting firm. Send feedback to inquire@ph.soluziona.com.)

Returning OFW seeks job in Philippines

By Cynthia R. Mamon
President and Managing Director
Sun Microsystems Philippines Inc.

I AM an OFW working in Saudi for the last 14 years. I am leaving KSA in the next few months and will now stay home for good with my family. The little savings that I have I am keeping for the continuing college education of my children. I am only 45 yrs old and still interested to get employed since I'm not good in a self-managed business (my savings might just go down

ASK YOUR CEO



the drain). What are my chances of being hired locally either in the government or private sector? My experience here is mainly office work and in front of the PC all the time and I can say, I'm good in Windows program like Word and Excel. Is there an office where I can go to where I can get specific advice and evaluate my chances of being hired again?

Is age a big factor in the hiring workers? Thank you.
Retiring OFW

Thank you for your letter dated Oct. 20. I welcome you back home after being an OFW in Saudi for 14 years.

You ask if there is a chance you can still be hired either in the government or private sector and my answer is yes. You did not elaborate though on your education/training and previous job experience for 14 years so it's difficult to give detailed advice where you can fit. Your basic knowledge in Windows, Word,

and Excel are useful and this may come in handy.

Our office often uses online job sites. I suggest you place your resume with them or other placement agencies. While you may not be young anymore, age should not be an issue.

I would also like to offer these words from the Bible Romans 8:28-30: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart... as when you are anxious... We know that in all things God works for good with those who love Him, those whom He has called according to His pur-

pose. Those whom God had already chosen, He also set apart to become like His Son, so that the Son would be the first among many brothers. And so, those whom God set apart, He called; and those He called, He put right with himself, and He shared His glory with them." God bless!

(Our CEO columnists can answer requests for career advice through this column. Send your request by postal mail to the People at Work Editor, PDI Bldg., Chino Rocas Ave., Makati City 1200 or e-mail peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.)



Dow hits 2003 high

NEW YORK—US stocks rallied in a late spurt on Monday, sending the blue-chip Dow to a new 2003 high, as investors bet the US Federal Reserve would keep interest rates down, but bonds fell and the dollar hit record lows.

In New York, platinum settled above \$800 an ounce for the first time in 23 years, on speculation that the amount being mined won't meet rising demand. Oil prices jumped after forecasts for more cold weather drove heating oil and natural gas futures higher.

Despite stocks' hefty gains, traders noted volume was fairly muted, with less than 1.2 billion shares changing hands on the New York Stock Exchange.

"The market is higher, but it's on very low volume -- not what we typically see when there's lots of traders participating," said Ozan Akcin, chief market strategist at Puglisi & Co. "But there's many factors keeping optimism afloat, coming from recent indicators showing a pickup in the

economy."

The Dow Jones Industrial average rose 102.59 points, or 1.04 percent, to 9,965.27, its highest close since May 28, 2002. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index gained 7.80 points, or 0.73 percent, to 1,069.30. The technology-laced Nasdaq Composite Index erased earlier losses and ended up 11.03 points, or 0.57 percent, at 1,948.85.

Boeing Co. was the Dow's biggest percentage gainer. Its shares rose \$1.12, or 2.95 percent, to \$39.12 after a top Boeing official said Boeing's new chief executive would ask the board to authorize the new 7E7, a more cost-efficient aircraft.

US Treasury bond prices slid as investors took profits on last week's mammoth gains and adjusted positions before the Federal Reserve's policy meeting.

"What's happening now is very typical of a post-rally, pre-Fed market," one trader said. "People are just trying to decide where equilibrium is."

Reuters

US to keep rates unchanged well into 2004, analysts say

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve policymakers will hold US interest rates at a 45-year low Tuesday and no increase is likely before late 2004 despite an economic boom, analysts said.

Speculation is mounting that Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan and his colleagues may drop their stated aim to hold rates steady for a "considerable period." But even if the language is relaxed, Greenspan will refuse to let rates rise, analysts said.

The Federal Reserve has slashed the key federal funds target interest rate in 13 moves since January 2001 from 6.5 percent to 1 percent now, the lowest since 1958.

A recent surge in growth has prompted market speculation about when that cycle might start to be reversed.

The US economy raced in the third quarter to a growth pace of 8.2 percent, the fastest since 1984, and growth of 4 percent or more is widely forecast for the last quarter of the year.

Financial markets appeared to be betting on a 25-percent probability of a 0.25 percentage point increase in the rate by March, and an 80-percent probability of an increase by May.

Stocks rose as investors banked on an encouraging economic assessment from the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC).

The Dow Jones industrials average of 30 top stocks climbed 102.59 points or 1.04 percent to close at 9,965.27, a high for the year.

"We believe the markets are overly

eager in pricing the start of a Fed tightening cycle," Merrill Lynch economists said in a report.

The FOMC would likely remove the words "considerable period" from its statement, to be released 2.15pm (1915 GMT) Tuesday, the analysts said.

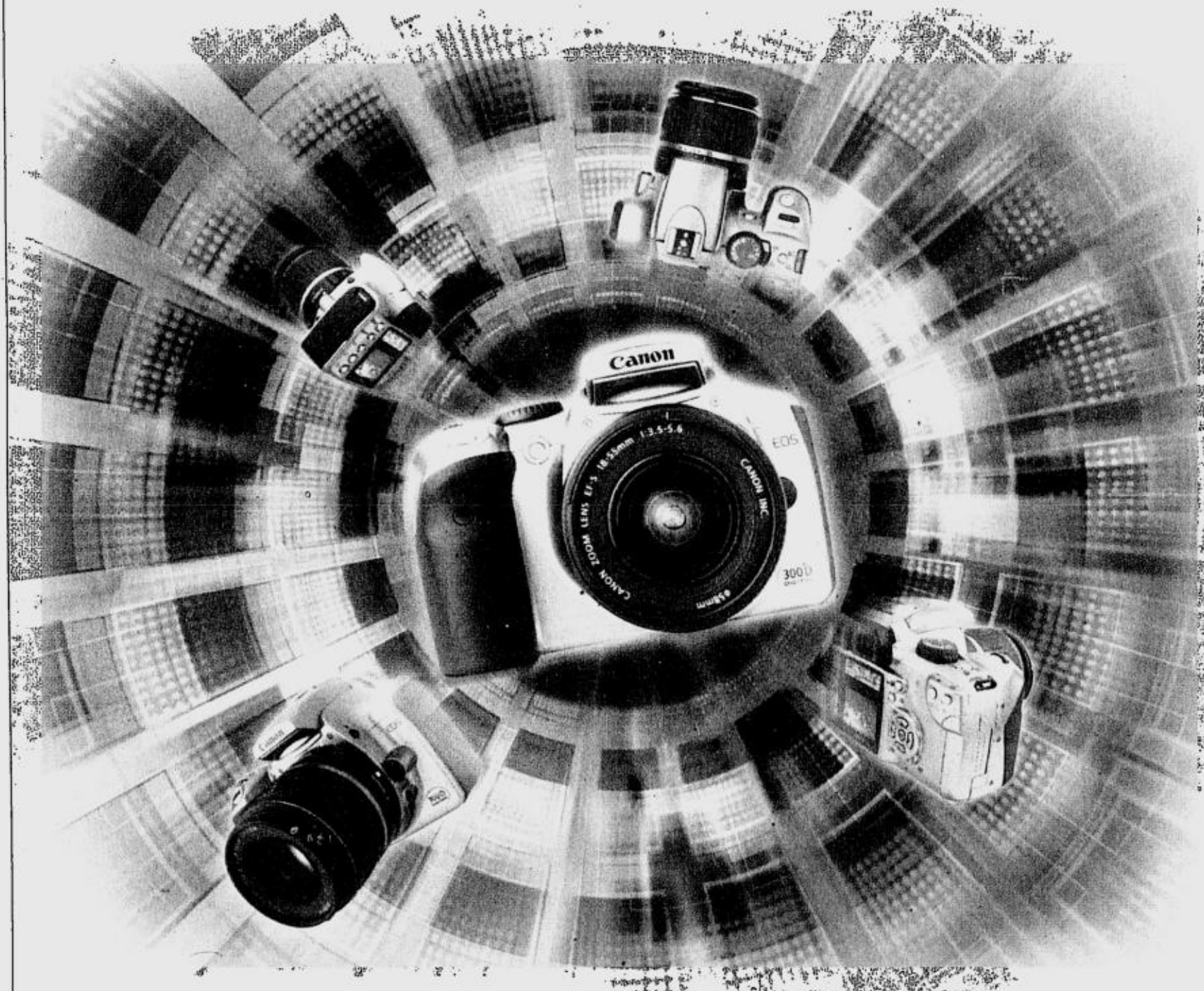
But "in contrast to market expectations, we see the likelihood that the Fed is on hold for all of 2004."

Inflation at a little over one percent was too low to prompt a tightening in monetary policy.

"It is not just the currently low rate of inflation that will temper the Fed's tightening hand but the still tremendous amount of slack that exists in the economy two years into the recovery," Merrill Lynch said. AFP

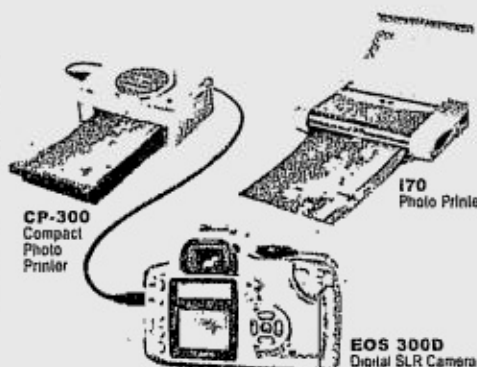
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S. Korea consumer outlook up

SEOUL—South Korea's consumer sentiment index rose to its highest level in nine months in November, government data showed on Tuesday, although the majority of households in the survey remained cautious about future economic prospects.

The Consumer Expectation Index, a major gauge of how consumers feel about the prospects for the economy and how they plan future spending, rose to 94.6 in November from 91.5 in October, the National Statistical Office said.

"Although the expectation index stands below 95, we are seeing the consumer sentiment continue to improve," Kang Ho-in, director of the finance ministry's economic analysis division, told Reuters. "Of course, it will take some time for actual purchases of consumer goods to increase sharply."

The index, based on a survey of 2,000 households in urban areas, rose for a second consecutive month in November and stood at its highest level since February, when it was 96.1.

A reading below 100 means consumers expecting the economy and living standards to get worse in the next six months outnumber those expecting an improvement.

A sub-index measuring future spending plans rose to 100.9 in November from 98.2 in October, breaching the 100 mark for the first time since May, when it stood at 100.

Higher-income households were more optimistic about the future economic situation than others as the index for those with monthly income of 3 million won (\$2,500) or more stood above 100 for the second month. Reuters

Singapore seen growing by 5.2% in '04—survey

SINGAPORE—Singapore-based economists expect economic growth in the city-state to surpass government estimates next year thanks to a recovery in global electronics demand and a rosy outlook for the US economy.

The Singapore economy will grow by an average 5.2 percent in 2004, exceeding the government's revised forecast of between 3 percent to 5 percent, according to a quarterly central bank survey of economists published Tuesday.

The economists surveyed expect gross domestic product—the sum of goods and services produced, taken as an indicator of economic health—to expand by one percent this year, at the top of the government's latest forecast range of 0.5 percent to one percent.

The figures from Tuesday's survey are based on the mean average forecasts of 25 economists polled by the Monetary Authority of Singapore in November.

Singapore is struggling to climb out of its worst economic downturn since it split from Malaysia in 1965. The unemployment rate widened to 5.9 percent in the third quarter this year, reaching its highest level since it hit 6 percent in 1986.

However, Singapore's economy grew a better-than-expected 1.7 percent in the July-September quarter from the same period in 2002.

The economists polled attributed their upbeat forecast to a positive outlook for the US economy and a rebound in electronics—Singapore's main manufacturing sector.

A National Association for Business Economics outlook, published in November, predicted that the economy in the United States—one of Singapore's biggest trading partners—will grow by 4.5 percent in 2004—its fastest rate in 20 years.

In addition, America's 9.4 percent productivity growth in the third quarter indicated a solid and durable economic expansion, the NABE survey said.

Pointing to a global recovery in demand for electronics, Singapore's industrial output surged 19.3 percent in October from a year earlier. AP

US needs partners to boost growth

WASHINGTON—With the dollar plumbing record lows against the euro, Treasury Secretary John Snow on Monday declined to speculate about possible intervention to support the US currency and said faster US growth was the key to helping the global economy.

In an interview with Reuters, Snow repeated US backing for a strong dollar and turned aside questions on whether he would rule out the possibility of currency intervention.

"It won't surprise you to hear me say that we never comment on the level of the currency," Snow said when asked why he thought the dollar was sliding despite mounting signs US economic activity was accelerating.

A plunging US dollar could hurt growth prospects for major trading partners such as Europe by making their goods more costly for American consumers.

"Of course, our policy on the dollar also has been articulated over and over—we favor a strong dollar and we feel that currencies' exchange value is best set in open, competitive currency markets where demand and supply forces are allowed to play out," Snow said.

As for ruling out intervention under any circumstances:

"I'm just not going to deal with it (the question of intervention)," he said. "I'm just not going to speculate on what we might do under some hypothetical circumstances that I can't foresee."

"I just don't believe it's a good idea to speculate—you might create misinterpretations which is one thing you want to avoid," Snow said when asked if there was any situation in which the United States might consider intervention.

The Treasury chief said he was not concerned about America's ability to attract capital to fund the deficit in its current account, the broadest measure of trade because it includes investment flows. But he emphasized other countries needed to spur their growth, which would in turn make them more attractive investment sites.

"That would be helpful on a current-account basis and it would create more disposable income in those countries ... (so) there would be bigger markets for what we sell," Snow said.

Reuters

BoJ sees long road to end of deflation

NAGASAKI—Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui said on Tuesday he is sure the nation's economy will keep recovering next year, but the road to overcoming deflation still looks long and hard.

He also promised the central bank would keep doing its utmost to guide the financial system towards better health and prevent the rise of systemic risk.

"The buds of economic recovery are finally appearing. We want to make sure these buds are taken care of, so they grow," Fukui said in a speech at Nagasaki University in southern Japan.

He said he was sure the economy would keep recovering next year, but that it was still fragile and required close attention.

"The BOJ will make utmost efforts to overcome deflation, ensuring the health of the financial system and making sure systemic risk does not rise," he said.

He was confident the economy would keep recovering next year, he said, but added that it was still fragile and required close attention.

"The road to overcoming deflation will be quite long and won't be smooth," Fukui said.

Robust exports, improving profits and stronger capital spending have recently raised expectations that Japan may finally be recovering from its worst downturn in decades.

But such hopes, in addition to recent data which showed a key inflation index up for the first time in five and a half years, have also raised speculation that the BOJ may soon reverse its accommodative stance.

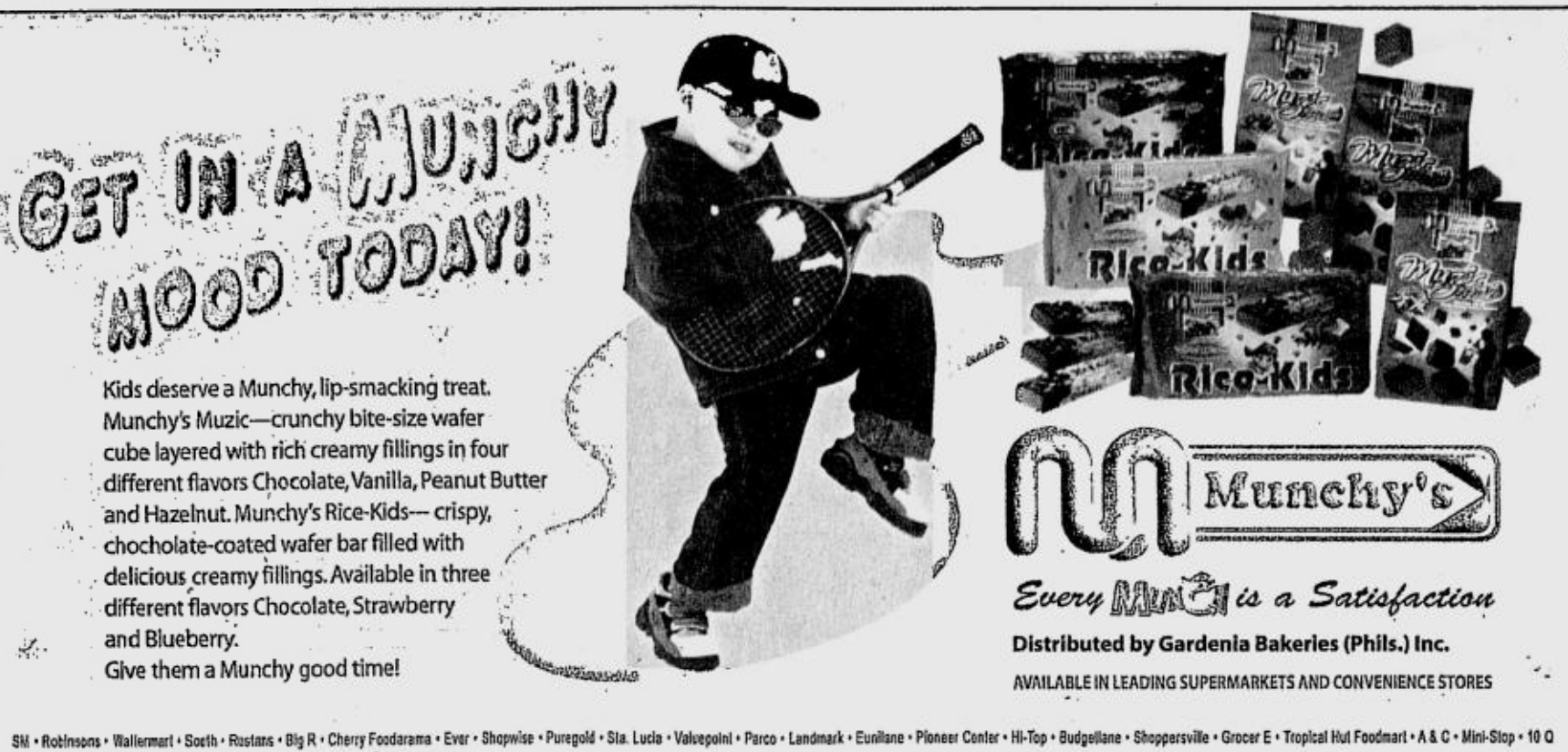
BOJ officials, including Fukui, have repeatedly tried to discourage such views.

Fukui had said in nearby Fukuoka on Monday that the rise in the key nationwide consumer price index in October was due to temporary factors and it would keep falling in the fiscal year starting next April.

Government data on Tuesday showed that Japanese machinery orders soared 17.4 percent in October from a month earlier as companies strived to meet global demand.

That was much better than a median forecast of a 5.0 percent rise in a Reuters poll of 22 economists last week. Compared with the same month last year, orders rose 23.1 percent.

Reuters



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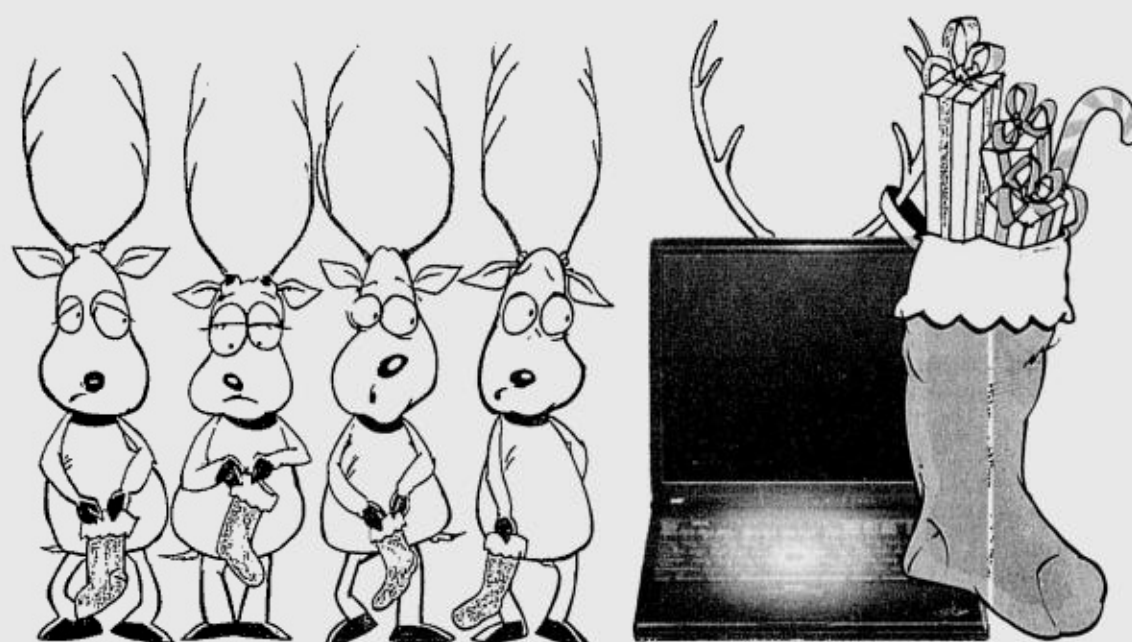
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STD Clinic RAPID Treat
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B' PHYSIQUE THERAPY MALE 5274294
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H'SOME ATHLETES 8337361

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

A-1 LIPAT BAHAY 4313975

*CHEAP LBAHAY 9260424•

LBAHAY 7113540

LBahay7433225

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San Miguel Village, Makati

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BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/31b/grge

P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

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RESIDENTIAL UNITS FOR SALE OR LEASE:

1, 2 & 3 Bedroom

IN-HOUSE FINANCING

UP TO 5 YEARS TO PAY

AT 0% INTEREST

AND BANK FINANCING

UP TO 10 YEARS

AT LOW INTEREST

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Tel: 910-0372

687-2363 / 631-3929

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MULTI-LAND III lots 100 sqm

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12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or

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15mln Fr Mktl 0917-8313226

Kensington Parkplace In Fort

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P3.5M Neg 0918-5170590

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Podium Cell 0917-5213838

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Rushi Ferdinandina 88 100sqm

4.5M Reg 3br 2th 0916-7069277

New Manila GM 09184491555

17 Samar Ave. 09184491555

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LOT

MANILA

391m² TAFT LRT LA SALLE

10yrs To Pay T6423793

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CONDO/TWNHSE

PASIG

READY FOR OCCUPANCY

RESIDENTIAL UNITS FOR SALE OR LEASE:

1, 2 & 3 Bedroom

IN-HOUSE FINANCING

UP TO 5 YEARS TO PAY

AT 0% INTEREST

AND BANK FINANCING

UP TO 10 YEARS

AT LOW INTEREST

#15 Escoria Drive, Ortigas, Pasig City

Tel: 910-0372

687-2363 / 631-3929

CAVITE

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2BR T/HOUSE own carport

ATTIC provision near MALL

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MKT NR AYALA

BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/21b/grge

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MANDALUYONG

EDSA 2br 31b 1prkg 98sqm

P3.5M Neg 0918-5170590

PASIG

Malayan Plaza ADB Ave. Nr

Podium Cell 0917-5213838

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO 1.4M 10% DP 9132224

Rushi Ferdinandina 88 100sqm

4.5M Reg 3br 2th 0916-7069277

New Manila GM 09184491555

17 Samar Ave. 09184491555

SAN JUAN



PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED COOPERATIVE BANK OF PANGASINAN

- Starting December 11, 2003, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed Cooperative Bank of Pangasinan.
- Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from December 11 to 19, 2003, to file claims for insured deposits.

PDIC representatives are stationed at the premises of the closed bank on the above cited dates to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors during office hours, Monday to Friday.

After the said dates, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., or by mail addressed to-

The Manager
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
2228 Chino Roces Avenue
1231 Makati City

- Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

- Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposits.
- Latest identification documents (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

Other documents maybe required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

- Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Cooperative Bank of Pangasinan is on May 28, 2005. After May 28, 2005, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDIC-Dep. 10 & 11, 2003)

Casa Verde Townhomes

Rodriguez-Lanuza Avenue, Ugong, Pasig City

INVITATION TO BID

Casa Verde Homeowners' Association (CVHA) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and bid for the Re-painting project of 127 Townhouse Units, Guard House, Pump Room, Clubhouse and other Common Areas in March 2004:

To participate in the bidding, please submit the basic registration requirements as follows:

- Corporate Profile
- List of Clients (for the last Five (5) years)
- DTI Business Name and SEC Registration Certificate
- Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License/Certificate
- TIN Certificate of Registration
- Statement of the prospective Bidder under oath and duly notarized that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation.
- Certification under oath and duly notarized that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
- PCAB License valid for the current calendar year with at least Category B "Medium A" for building and industrial plant "Specialty on PAINTING".

ACTIVITIES

- Submission of Registration Requirement Dec. 28, 2003
- Deadline for submission of sealed Bids January 28, 2004
- Opening of sealed bids
- Awarding

CVHA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect/s or informality on the bids received and accept the bid deemed most advantageous to the Association but does not guarantee that any award shall be made. Its decision shall be final and binding.

(Sgd.) Atty. Fred Nasser
President

Emmanuel Alejo
Chairman - Committee
on Renovation & Const.

(PDI-Dep. 10, 2003)



ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT

Pilar Street, Zamboanga City 7000

Tel. No. 991-1533 • 991-1857
Fax No. 991-2279
E-mail Address:
zcwdccso@jettlink.com.ph

INVITATION TO BID

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT (ZCWD) is inviting interested Licensed Generating Set Dealers to submit bids for the following:

PR/JO NO.	DESCRIPTION
7086	Brand New 50 Kva Standby Generating Set Sound/Weatherproof type, Continuous duty, Skid-mounted, Complete with accessories for Canelar Moret Production Well (A5). Approved Budget Cost: P870,000.00

Interested Licensed Dealers may obtain Bid Forms and Detailed Specifications at the BAC Secretariat, 2/F, ZCWD Bldg., Pilar St., Zamboanga City after payment of a minimal non-refundable fee of P250.00.

Pre-Bid Conference : December 12, 2003
2:00 PM AT THE 2/F ZCWD BLDG.,
PILAR ST., ZAMBOANGA CITY

Submission of Bids : December 17, 2003
2:00 PM AT THE 2/F ZCWD BLDG.,
PILAR ST., ZAMBOANGA CITY

The ZCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive minor informalities in the bid receives, and to award the contract to the supplier whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC 2, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ALEJO S. ROJAS, JR.
BAC 2 Chairman

(PDI - December 10, 2003)



PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PAGSASAKA AT PANGINGISDA

(National Agricultural and Fishery Council).

Diliman, Lungsod ng Quezon

Tel. No. 928-8741 to 65 local 510

Tender No. 2003NPGA610/02

December 1, 2003

INVITATION TO BID

The National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) hereby invites sealed bids for the sale of 19,100 (+0% / -5%) metric tons (MT) at seller's option of Ammonium Sulphate Fertilizer for end December to early January 2004 arrival of shipment.

Tender documents can be secured from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), NAFC, Apacible Hall, Department of Agriculture Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City starting on December 4, 2003.

Prospective bidder may start submitting their pre-qualification documents on December 5, 2003. The deadline for submission of the pre-qualification documents shall be on December 12, 2003. Pre-qualified bidders shall be notified anytime before the pre-bid conference. Only pre-qualified bidders shall be allowed to attend the pre-bid conference which shall be held on December 17, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. at the NAFC Conference Room.

Only fully completed sealed bids from pre-qualified bidders shall be submitted not later than 10:00 a.m. on December 19, 2003. Bids received after the scheduled time will not be accepted/entertained and will be returned unopened.

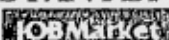
For details, please contact Ms. Paz Venic or Ms. Peachy Agustin at tel. nos 928-1986 or 929-8234.

(Sgd.) MARIDEL TRINIDAD-DIZON
Executive Director

(PDI - Dec 3 & 10, 2003)

SEND YOUR RESUMES INSTANTLY

VISIT US AT www.jobmarketonline.com



WANTED

- 1-MECHANICAL ENGINEERING GRADUATE - Not more than 40 yrs. old
- 2-INSPECTOR - Male; College graduate, 38 years old below
- 3-MECHANIC

Apply at:

SANTRANS CORPORATION
Blk. 5 Lot 5, Mt. Hgts. Subd.,
Pangrap Village, Caloocan City
Tel. #939-32-39

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OF MANILA NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT
& EX-OFFICIO SHERIFF

Foreclosure No. 03-2040

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135 as amended in relation to Section 20 of RA No. 4726, otherwise known as the Condominium Act, filed on October 23, 2003 by GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS CONDOMINIUM CORP., Petitioner, with postal address at Ground Flr., GRTCC, 1129 Concepcion St., Ermita, Manila, against GMCC UNITED DEVELOPMENT CORP., Respondent, with postal address at Unit 701-G Tower 3, Gotesco Regency Twin Towers, Concepcion St., Ermita, Manila in order to satisfy the obligation of the respondent to the petitioner in the amount of P263,218.39 as of October 22, 2003 inclusive of penalty charges plus litigation expenses, sheriff's fees and other charges, the undersigned Clerk of Court & Ex-Officio Sheriff of Manila thru her deputy, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for CASH and in Philippine Currency on December 29, 2003 at 10:00 AM or soon thereafter at the Office of the Clerk of Court & Ex-Officio Sheriff of Manila, 4th Floor, City Hall Bldg., Manila, the real property mentioned hereunder including improvements existing thereon, to wit:

CONDOMINIUM CERTIFICATE OF TITLE
NO. 11384

"SEVENTH FLOOR-TOWER 3 - UNIT 701 containing an area of 142.73 sq. meters, consisting of Living Room, Three (3) Bedrooms, Three (3) Toilets & Baths, Kitchen, Maid's Quarter, Foyer, Balcony and Laundry Area, (GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM)"

Prospective buyers or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate and verify for themselves the title to said property and the encumbrances thereon. If any there be Manila, Philippines, November 12, 2003.

(Sgd.) JENNIFER H. DELA CRUZ-BUENDIA
Clerk of Court
& Ex-Officio Sheriff

(Sgd.) CARLOS Q. BARREDO
Sheriff In-Charge

(PDI-Dep. 10, 17 & 24, 2003)

HELP ME ... find my relations pls!



I was adopted in Seoul, S. Korea from the Phils. 21 yrs. ago. My date of birth is guessed to be Feb. '82. I was told one of my parents is Muslim, probably coming from Mindanao. When I was born I have this appendage in my ear - like 2 baby fingers, and I might have been born prematurely. As a child I have this

fear of fish and I don't know where it came from. Some say that I may have been nearly drowned. These are the only data I have to start with.

If you have any information to help me please text me at 09102109849 or write to: BABY MIRIAM. PDI BOX 999, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. THANKS!

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of **SPI SOLUTIONS, INC.** (the "Corporation"), which shortened the term of its corporate existence to end on December 31, 2003 and thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date, has been approved by its Board of Directors and shareholders at duly constituted meetings both held on November 14, 2003.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present same at the Corporation's principal place of business located at SPI Building, Pascor Drive, Sto. Niño, Parañaque City.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) GEMMA A. SANTOS
Corporate Secretary

(PDI - November 26, December 3 & 10, 2003)

Pay ON time! WIN big time!

Congratulations sa mga winners ng October 26 raffle draw!

SAMSUNG ENTERTAINMENT SHOWCASE WORTH P50,000

ERNESTO A. NONO
Batasan, Q.C.

IMARFLEX KITCHEN SHOWCASE WORTH P13,000

CHERUBYN G. SEE
Maharlika, Q.C.

IMARFLEX KITCHEN SHOWCASE WORTH P13,000

EDGARDO R. QUERIJERO
North Fairview, Q.C.

PHILIPS VCD PLAYER

Simeon R. Regio
Kingspoint Subd.
Bagbag, Q.C.

AVON GIFT CERTIFICATE WORTH P5,000

Felicitas T. Rivore
Novelches, Q.C.

Rosemarie V. Joaquin
Sangandaan, Q.C.

Fortunato M. Tabale
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Evelyn B. Lauron
Pasong Tama, Q.C.

Rosemarie B. Fresh
Commonwealth, Q.C.

Bernadette M. Cuadernos
Hobart Village,
Kalyagayan, Q.C.

BAYANTEL CORPLESS CALLER ID PHONE

Amor V. Labuguin
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Malvin M. Torres
East Kamies, Q.C.

Myma E. Parjan
Fairview, Q.C.

BIOESSENCE GIFT CERTIFICATE WORTH P1,200

Janet Jean A. Guevarra
Project 7, Q.C.

Jose A. Vargas
Holy Spirit, Q.C.

Digno L. Camacho
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Teresita H. Rubio
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Reynaldo F. Andal
Pasong Tama, Q.C.

Elizabeth N. Talimoro
SfDM, Q.C.

Faustino A. Dioso
Bahay Toro, Q.C.

Norma Q. Genilo
Tandang Sora Ave., Q.C.

Patricia Q. Vieras
Bagong Pagasa, Q.C.

Rodera Z. Garcia
Novelches Proper, Q.C.

Jerry S. Chu
SfDM, Q.C.

Danilo E. San Juan
Project 6, Q.C.

Victoria G. Yap
Dona Imelda, Q.C.

Margarita E. Raquel
Project 6, Q.C.

Lemuel E. Garcillano
Project 6, Q.C.

Antonio Rowel Y. San Vicente
Fairview, Q.C.

Adeline B. Perile
Pasong Putik, Q.C.

Ricardo D. De Joya
Bagong Pagasa, Q.C.

Benny A. Leano
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Foma D. Dala Rosa
Novelches Proper, Q.C.

FANCY PHONE

Tirso A. Nervex
Cruz Subd Kalyagayan, Q.C.

Agapito L. Andres Jr.
Santa Ana, Bgy 772, Manila

Magdalena S. Vinluan
Batasan Hills, Q.C.

Elvira A. Najos
Del Monte Ave., Palto, Q.C.

Emma A. Gonzales
Jordan Planes Subd.,
Santa Monica, Q.C.

Lilian I. Lana
Project 7, Q.C.

IMARFLEX POP-UP TOASTER

Armando I. Bernardo Jr.
Philm, Q.C.

Jose D. Dovers
3th Ave., Socorro, Q.C.

Josefina T. San doval
SfDM, Q.C.

Jovita F. Mamotos
Novelches Proper, Q.C.

Pedro O. Occasion Sr.
Project 6, Q.C.

Enrique A. Gudolano
Project 4, Q.C.

Marissa M. De Vera
Batasan Hills, Q.C.

IMARFLEX STEAM IRON

Marianita S. Ombos
Santa Monica, Q.C.

Priscilla E. Joamin
Laging Handa, Q.C.

Rosalia B. Mondala
Kamuning, Q.C.

Alleen V. Romasanta
Tandang Sora, Q.C.

Benito E. Ruy
Polanco, Malabon

Rosalyn A. Siao
Bagong Pagasa, Q.C.

Haydee P. Jinang
Mapulang Lupa, Valenzuela

Evelyn Q. Libunao
Bagong Pagasa, Q.C.

INSULAR LIFE PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE WORTH P100,000

Leonardo Y. Asinas
Paso De Blas, Valenzuela

Wilma A. Salomon
Polanco, Malabon

Ricky G. German
Payatas, Q.C.

ISLAND COVE GIFT CERTIFICATE

Esmeralda C. Tactay
Apollonio Samson, Q.C.

Elena Z. Mendoza
Culiel, Q.C.

Laura D. Asilo
Vaera, Q.C.

PALMOLIVE GIFT PACK WORTH P400

Simonette R. Mercado
Socorro Murphy, Q.C.

Joel Alphonso A. Samson
GSIS Village, Sangandaan,
Q.C.

Rogelio A. Molina
Malanday, Valenzuela

Philip D. Diao
Laging Handa, Q.C.

Ramon L. Carpio
Holy Spirit, Q.C.

Mila L. Kho
Manresa, Q.C.

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Willie J. Uy
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Libs, Q.C.

Imelda, Dacuyuy
Project 4, Q.C.

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Bahay Toro, Q.C.

Atman C. Tan
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Ma Luisa S. Mascarnas
Loyola Heights, Q.C.

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Teachers Village, West, Q.C.

Consuelo D. Go
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Godfrey A. Puchero
Culiel, Q.C.

Gloria H. Quimpo
North Fairview, Q.C.

Ma. Cleo B. Tabajera
San Antonio, Q.C.

Elvie A. Maata
Payatas, Q.C.

SC JOHNSON GIFT PACK WORTH P1,000

Norma L. Dela Cruz
San Bartolome, Q.C.

Jesus A. Talavera
Cubao, Q.C.

Marita S. Herrera
San Bartolome, Q.C.

Jesusa C. Malab
San Bartolome, Q.C.

Jesusa B. Dalumpines
Project 7, Q.C.

Sonia M. Padilla
Murphy, Q.C.

Fe C. Diola
San Bartolome, Q.C.

Emmanuel Q. Palo
Sacred Heart, Q.C.

Jocelyn T. Wu
Project 7, Q.C.

Rose Alleen F. Azores
Project 3, Q.C.

Judy J. Marcaila
Cubao, Q.C.

Romeo M. Salcedo Jr.
Holy Spirit, Q.C.

Ma. Lilibeth B. Emotin
Santa Lucia, Q.C.

Melchior L. Ventura
San Bartolome, Q.C.

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OBITUARIES



In loving memory of

Teresita Santos-Vesagas, M.D.

who went home to our Heavenly Father on
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The following Masses are offered for the peaceful repose
of her soul on her 10th Death Anniversary.

December 11, 2003:

Immaculate Conception Shrine	5:00 a.m.
St. Joseph Subdivision, Butuan City	
Holy Redeemer Parish	6:00 a.m.
Butuan City	
M.J. Santos Hospital Chapel	8:00 a.m.
554 Montilla Boulevard, Butuan City	
St. Joseph Cathedral	12:00 nn
E. Luna St., Butuan City	
Sto. Niño Shrine	6:00 p.m.
Libertad, Butuan City	
Sta. Rosa de Lima Parish Church	6:00 a.m.
Bagong Ilog, Pasig City	
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception	6:00 a.m.
Pasig City	
Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament Chapel	6:30 a.m.
Valle Verde 5, Pasig City	
Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace	12:15 p.m.
(Our Lady of EDSA) Edsa corner Ortigas Avenue	

January 10, 2004:

St. Euphrasia Church	8:15 a.m.
11766 Shoshone Avenue, Granada Hills, CA	

Her husband Teodoro,
children Ted, Tarq, Therese, Titus, Tonypet, Thessa, Timmy,
Steve and Almee;
son and daughters-in-law Jessie, Connie, Rita and Janet;
grandchildren Ted-d, Francis, Nikki, Jabby, Lorenz, Angela, Issy,
Rabby, Galle, Gino, Teejay and Tasha
request the readers to pray for her.

The officials and personnel of the Department of National Defense
acknowledge with deep sorrow the passing on December 7, 2003
at the Makati Medical Center at the age of 59 of

Brig. Gen. Victor R. Obillo AFP (Ret.)

An Officer and a Gentleman, Member of PMA Class 1966
and Chief of the Real Estate Management Office of the
Department of National Defense

The Department requests friends and pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Gen. Obillo is survived by his loving wife **Estelita**;
children **Mildred** and **Dave**, **Victos** and **Myra**, **Drs. Lister**
and **Kit** and **Oliver** and **Sherly**.

His remains lie in state at the Libingan Ng Mga
Bayani Mortuary Chapel, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday December 11, 2003 at
the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City
at 12:00 noon.

SOLEDAD SY NGO

Peacefully joined her Creator
on December 5, 2003 at the age 86.

Her beloved husband NGO LIONG BEN (†); children HELEN
& TONG HAI (†), TONY & CRISTINA (UY); EDGAR & RITA
(CHUA LEE), CONCHITA & LUIS (CHUA), MARY & MARIO
(CO) and VICTOR & THERESITA (TAPAY), 18 grandchildren,
15 great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12
G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 13, 2003 at the Chinese
Cemetery at 9:00 a.m.

COL. SAMUEL LOPEZ MILANEZ SR. AFP (RET)

of Daraga, Albay & New York City

Peacefully joined his Creator on
December 6, 2003 at the age of 63.

His beloved mother Concepcion; his loving wife Rosela
(Bong); children Rommel, Samuel Jr., Sharon and Sheila;
brothers, nephews, nieces and friends request the pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel of Libingan ng mga
Bayani, Fort Bonifacio.

Interment will be on December 13, 2003, Saturday at
12 noon after the Mass at 11 a.m.

DEATH NOTICE

PEDRO M.
COMPENDIO
Joined our Creator
on December 9,
2003

at the age of 82.
His body lies in
state at his
residence M.H. del
Pilar St., Liliw,
Laguna.
Interment will be
announced later.

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"Now we have faith, hope and love, these three,
but the greatest of these is love."
- 1 Corinthians 13:13

JOSEPHINE CACCAM SISON

Peacefully joined her Creator
On December 7, 2003 at the age of 60.

Her loving husband ED; son MARK, son HOWIE and wife AISA;
granddaughter CHIME; brothers and sisters FRANK and DORIS,
LILIA and JOE, PEPS and GLO, DAVE and FELY; nephews and
nieces CAROL ANN, WEBB and KAYE; EMILIO Jr., LANAI
and NOAH; JOYCE, JASMIN and JOEY; NADINE, CAROLYN,
JOCELYN and JONATHAN, PUNAY and JOY; ANGELA,
TERESA, and ELENA.

Relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray
for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at the Resurrection Chapel
of St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish, UP Los Baños, Laguna
(nightly mass at 8:00 p.m.). Her family will bring her to the
Church of the Risen Lord, UP Diliman, Q.C. on Friday,
December 12, 2003. The necrological service will be at 6:00 p.m. Her
remains will be brought to the Eternal Gardens Crematorium
at Baesa, Caloocan City on Saturday, December 13, 2003 at 4:00 a.m.

**"For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whoever
believes in Him shall not perish
but have everlasting life."** John 3:16



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MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY
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OCTAVIO "VIC" E. SAULO

Peacefully joined His Creator on December 7, 2003
at the age of 69 at the Philippine Heart Center.

His bereaved wife Virgie; children Sonny (†) & Miriam, Douglas & Elena, Joan
& Ric, Elvie & Allan, Irene & Jun, Doris & Olan, Bernadette & Edward, Jean &
Emman; all grandchildren, all relatives and friends, the officers & staff of the Saulo
Automotive Parts, Inc. of which he is the President & Chairman of the Board request the
pious readers to pray for the Eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Superior Chapel, Annex Bldg., Araneta
Avenue, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass will be held on Sunday, December 14, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. Interment
follows at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

DTI warns public against fake freight forwarders

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has warned the public against unscrupulous freight forwarders that take advantage of overseas Filipino workers sending packages to their families here.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said people should be careful in choosing cargo and freight

forwarding agencies because there had been numerous cases in the past of lost packages or delayed deliveries, according to the Philippine Shippers Bureau.

The government agency said that while some lost packages were retrieved through the help of the Bureau of Customs, other complaints remained unresolved because these involved "fly-by-night" forwarders, which authorities had a hard time capturing.

To avoid loss of packages, the trade department advised the public to make sure balikbayan boxes are entrusted to legitimate forwarding companies.

"Filipinos abroad should not deal with individuals posing as agents for freight forwarders. The profile of the freight forwarding company as well as its legitimate Philippine counterpart must also be ascertained," said Roxas in a statement.

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3. 316i	2003	Orient Blue	2,000 kms	1,390,000
4. 318i Executive	2002	Black Sapphire	16,000 kms	1,525,000
5. 318i Limousine	2002	Titanium Silver	13,000 kms	1,590,000
6. 318i Limousine	2002	Black Sapphire	8,000 kms	1,630,000
7. 318i Limousine	2003	Steel Gray	11,000 kms	1,650,000
8. 318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	9,000 kms	1,650,000
9. 318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	2,000 kms	1,675,000
10. 318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	1,000 kms	1,675,000
11. 318i Limousine	2003	Orient Blue	4,000 kms	1,675,000
12. 318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	5,000 kms	1,675,000
13. 318i Sport	2003	Titanium Silver	5,000 kms	2,100,000
14. 325i	2003	Titanium Silver	12,000 kms	2,300,000
15. 325i	2003	Titanium Silver	3,000 kms	2,375,000
16. 325i	2003	Titanium Silver	1,000 kms	2,400,000
17. 325i Sport	2003	Imola Red	3,000 kms	2,475,000
18. 525i	2001	Orient Blue	7,000 kms	2,500,000
19. 525i	2002	Titanium Silver	18,000 kms	2,550,000
20. 525i	2002	Titanium Silver	13,000 kms	2,550,000
21. 740i	2003	Black Sapphire	5,000 kms	2,950,000
22. 525i	2003	Toledo Blue	8,000 kms	3,100,000
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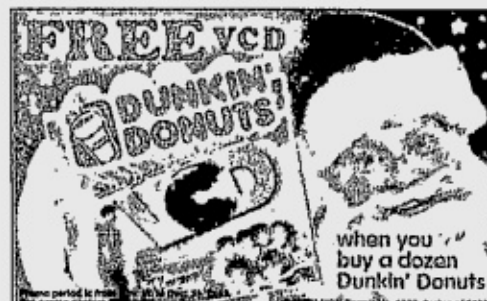


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24/7 LIFESTYLE

Former ugly duckling is Daffy Duck's new nemesis

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—She talks as fast as the Road Runner, and is as pliant as Daffy Duck and as charming and witty as Bugs Bunny. Speedy Gonzalez would lose to her in a marathon talking contest.

Actress Jenna Elfman admits she talks too much and, sometimes, too fast. She recalls that, in grade school, a mathematics teacher taped her mouth so she would pay attention in class instead of entertaining the other kids.

"Puberty wasn't really the best time of my life," says Elfman, who appears as the humor-impaired vice president of comedy, Kate Houghton, in Warner Bros. Pictures' fusion of cartoon and live-action comedy, "Looney Tunes: Back in Action".

"I had to wear a head gear for several years because eight of my teeth were pulled out, plus I had buck teeth and braces. I looked like a space creature, and so my classmates treated me like one," she continues.

The irrepressible 32-year-old 5'10" tall ac-



WITH co-star Brendan Fraser and some feisty 'toon characters

tress adds that she grew an additional five inches in one year and "there's a lot of phenomena that goes along with that!"

A three-time Emmy Award-nominee and winner of a Golden Globe Award for her role in the television sitcom "Dharma and Greg," the bubbly and outgoing actress, who has also appeared in "Ed TV," "Keeping the Faith" and "Town and Country," uses her hands a lot to emphasize a point.

She mimics, changes her voice to imitate a cartoon character, laughs and giggles. There is not a dull moment with her.

In a brown jacket and suede pants, she sashays gracefully into the room like a ballerina. One male Italian journalist described her as "hot, especially when she's wearing shorts." Obviously, years of training in classical ballet since age five paid off.

Looney Tunes fan

"I've been watching Looney Tunes ever since I was in my playpen," she says. "My sister Debbie is 15 years my senior and my brother Rick is 11 years my senior. When they were going to soccer practices and the like, I was left alone watching Looney Tunes cartoons. So I can really say I grew up with Bugs, Daffy, Sylvester, Tweety, Elmer Fudd, Road Runner, Wile E. Coyote and Porky Pig."

Elfman is thrilled to be acting with her favorite Looney Tunes characters. She adds what she loves about the Looney Tunes characters is they are so rebellious and feisty.

Of all the characters, her favorite is Bugs Bunny because "no matter who is out to get him, he still maintains his grace, style and charm."

Unlike Mickey Mouse, "Bugs has edge. Bugs and his friends are anarchists, and I like something with edge," she explains.

Directed by Joe Dante ("Gremlins"), "Looney Tunes: Back in Action" marks the first time that Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and the

FORMER/C2

EVER-LOVABLE
Dharma to you and me

Jenna Elfman can outtalk even her cartoon co-stars in 'Looney Tunes: Back in Action'



Symphonies of the Season

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December 17, 7pm (Wednesday)

Let Heaven and Nature Sing
featuring Musicworx Ensemble

December 18, 7pm (Thursday)

Kundi Krismas
featuring The Kundiрана Ministry

December 19, 7pm (Friday)

Kundi Krismas
featuring The Kundiрана Ministry

December 20, 8pm (Saturday)

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Glee Club

December 22, 8pm (Monday)

Deck the Malls, Sounds of Christmas
featuring Bagong Himig Alumni Choir

December 23, 5pm (Tuesday)

Kundiрана - The Instrument
featuring the Manila Philharmonic
Orchestra

December 27, 7pm (Saturday)

Let Your Praises Be Heard
by Bukas Palad

December 30, 7pm (Tuesday)

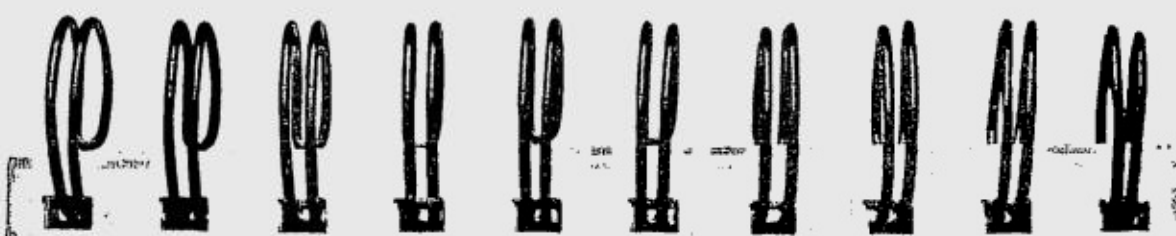
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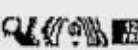
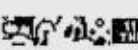
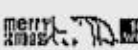


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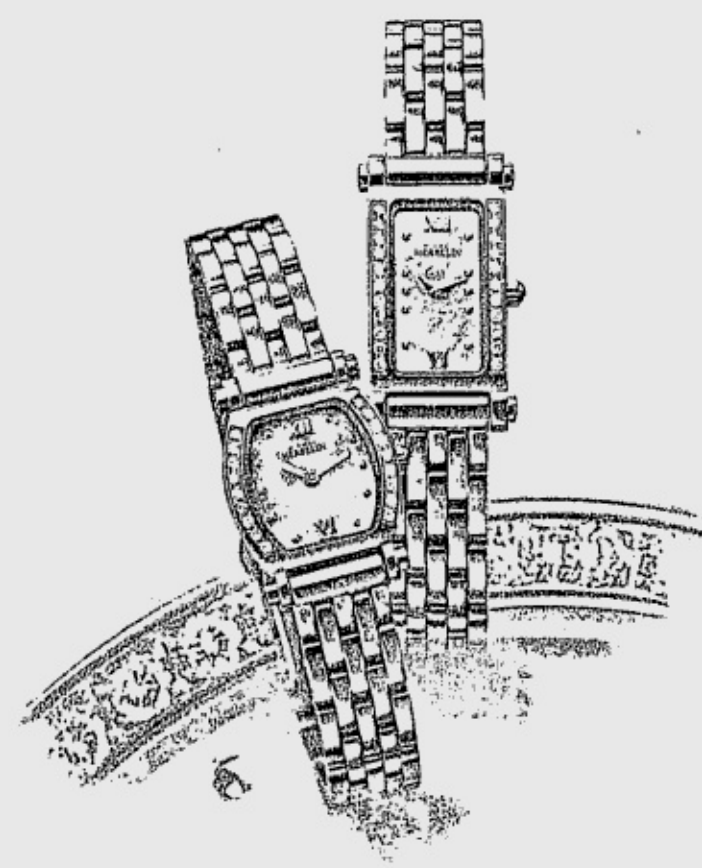
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Why we accept the Rejects

By Jeffrey Pe Benito
2bU! Correspondent

TYSON Ritter is all over the second All American Rejects release, "Time Stands Still," much like he was all over the first, "Swing Swing."

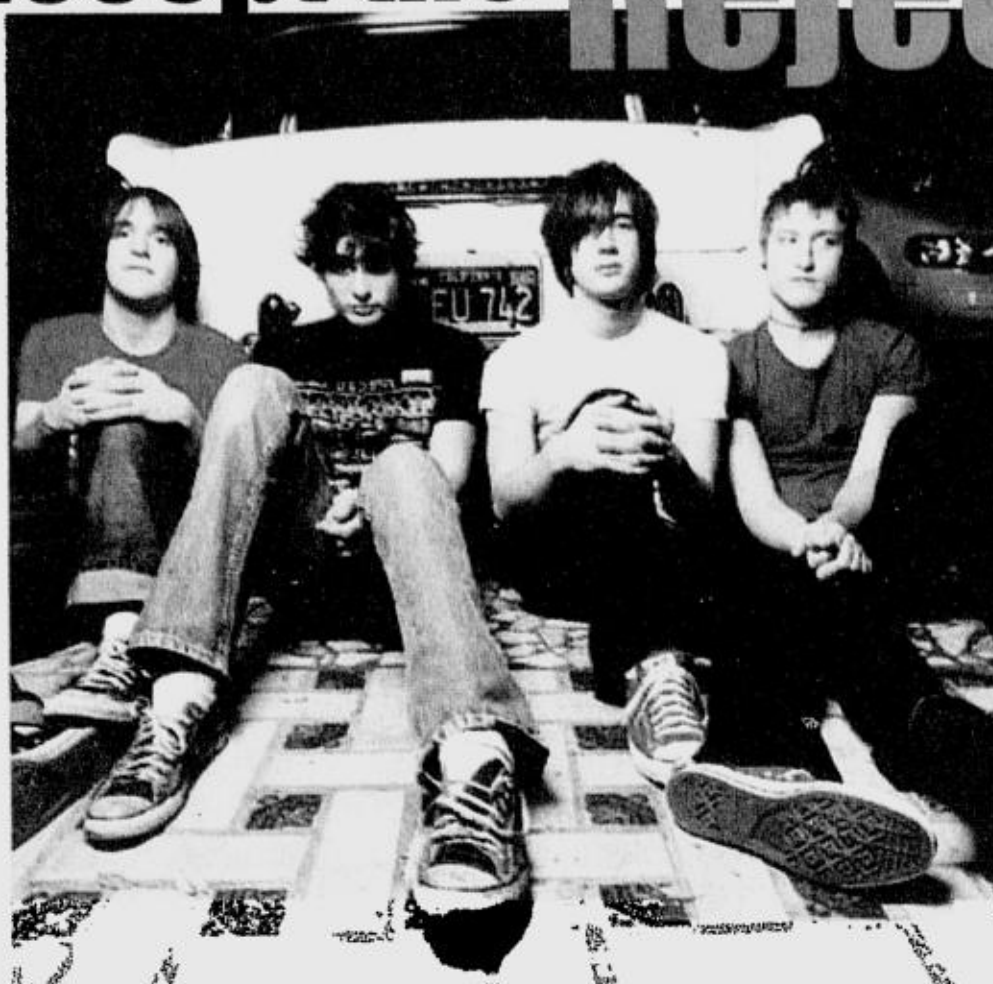
For a group that borders on rock, they sure act mysteriously like another kind of band, gravitating inexplicably toward over-emphasized body movements, glorified close-ups and music videos designed to show as much of the lead vocalist's face as possible.

While not exclusive to any kind of musical artist, that behavior is most commonly found in groups of guys who dance on shores, shake their booty over popular bridges, form V formations over deserts, and wink 50 times while riding roller coasters, all to an asinine beat, singing a symphony of unintelligible lines like "how was I supposed to know, you never told me."

If their video-making tendencies lean to the unspeakable evil of a pop trend, their lyrics provide little solace. Doggedly challenging to any 7-year-old, their pop-rock music is infused with pitiful excuses for rhymes disguised as wordings. For starters, what's the fascination with not breathing? Do you really need three songs with different variations of not breathing, before the listener eventually realizes, "Oh, wait, you can't breathe?"

And what's the deal with the bloody heart-break? There's nothing wrong with 11 songs about things falling apart, but when there's nothing but incessant repetition of the phrases running away, being alone and gone away, really, how long is it supposed to take before you tire of it?

It's Lifehouse gone horrendously wrong. Emotions are assumed, not written about; nursery rhymes are all over; and the entire English lexicon has burned down and all that's left are clichés. Nothing and no one you've heard before, for instance, has probably prepared you for this: "Alone with you, alone with me/What can I do, I can not breathe/My heart is torn, for



ALL AMERICAN REJECTS—loud, juvenile, carefree sound

all to see/Alone with you, alone with me."

So then, what gives? Is there anything that makes the band's self-titled album worth it? Think about it like this. They don't have the substance. They don't have the originality. And boy, they really don't have the lyrics.

So what do the All American Rejects have going for them?

Everything else. While the Rejects' lyrics redefine tiresome, their music does not. For sure, it isn't remotely

new, nor in any way groundbreaking. But the kind of music they brew isn't crap either; the beat is fairly well constructed and Tyson's voice, while without much diversity, pulls off the feel—he takes you to a place smack in the middle of bitter and hopeful, angsty and romantic.

Second, sure, "Swing, swing from the tangles of/My heart is crushed by a former love/Can you help me find a way/To carry on again" wouldn't make sense in dogspeak. But what you have to ask yourself about it is less "What

They don't have substance and originality, but the All American Rejects have everything going for them



VOCALIST Tyson Ritter

the heck does that mean?" than "can I bob my head to it?" And you can.

In fact, forget shaking your head. Save for the most disciplined among us, the song will echo in your head, day in and day out, whether you want it to or not.

Radio-friendly and beguiling, the album offers riffs that are borderline addictive, tunes that you've long known but haven't heard in a while, and a forsaken sense of reason.

What gives? Just this.

You've got a Tyson Ritter, a Tom Welling look-alike with some talent, on the mike, and Nick Wheeler, an all-around artist, on a variety of instruments. You've got two other people, Mike Kennerty on guitar and Chris Gaylor on drums, though most can hardly care less. You've got prozac-hyped music, catchy beats and the B-type charm of Simple Plan.

Should you get the album? If you like your music smart, edgy and sophisticated, forget it. It's formulaic to the bone, and it offers all the depth of a spoon.

If, however, you can live with the fact that it can get gratefully repetitive, the album appeals to a basic urge to think about nothing, and bob one's head. And if you like you have a taste for the loud, the juvenile, the carefree, you should definitely get it. If along with that, you like your riffs explosive and memorable, you'll be like a kid in a playground, anxiously waiting to get muddled.

Shouldn't we all be?

Former ugly duckling

From page C1

entire Looney Tunes gang star in a feature film set entirely in a live action world and interact with real co-stars.

The film also stars Brendan Fraser ("George of the Jungle," "The Mummy," "The Mummy Returns," "Blast from the Past" and "Bedazzled") and Steve Martin ("Bringing Down the House," "Father of the Bride," "Father of the Bride Part II" and "Bowfinger").

Fraser, who describes his co-star as a modern-day "Carol Burnett or Lucille Ball," says "she has an amazing facility for physical comedy, and a spitfire delivery. She's a pro all the way, and easy to work with because she enjoys being there. She really likes her job, which I think is part of what makes her so good at it."

Elfman has also been dubbed as the female version of Tim Allen or the younger version of Shirley MacLaine.

Giving up ballet

Born Jennifer Mary Butala and raised in Los Angeles, Elfman admits she wanted to be a nun when she was young. "Then I got classically trained as a ballerina at age five and all I wanted to do was to dance."

An ankle injury at age 9, a tendon that got separated from the bone at 12 and a chip fracture and a bone surgery on the same ankle at age 13, resulted in recurring pain and forced her to drop ballet and become an actress.

A graduate of the Los Angeles High School for the Arts, Elfman has show biz blood. Her uncle is singer Tony Butala, who founded and performs with the musical group The Lettermen.

She dropped out of California State University in Northridge in her freshman year and enrolled at the Beverly Hills Playhouse where she trained under renowned acting teacher Milton Katselas. She met her future husband, aspiring actor Bodhi Elfman, when they both auditioned for a Sprite commercial. They have been married since 1995.

"Bodhi is my soul mate," she says.



"A MODERN-DAY Carol Burnett or Lucille Ball," says Fraser of his co-star

"He is also a free spirit like me. Although both of us are actors, there is no such thing as competition between us. We just enjoy life together."

Both are members of the Church of Scientology which, Elfman says, helps her live her life better.

On Brendan Fraser

Elfman admits she always wanted to work with Fraser since she saw him in "Encino Man". She thought he was brilliant. "I was so taken by his belief, by the way he played the character for real," she explains.

Working with him, she finds him "awesome," gushing like a teenager talking about her crush, "He's great. He's charming. He is one of my dearest friends now and I know I can trust him. He knows what he's doing in comedy. He's a great actor. He's talented. He's also a great photographer. He's an artist. He's amazing."

Did she tell him that?

"Oh yes, every day!" she giggles. "Every time I see him I say, 'Brendan, I love you! What are we doing next? Let's do a romantic comedy. Let's do something fun. I'll be your wife. I'll be your maid. I don't care. I'll be anyone you want!'"

Working with nothing

Elfman admits it the first two weeks of filming where difficult as she had to learn how to work with nothing. "The vacuum is so intimidating. It's like dancing without a partner. It took me a couple of weeks to adjust. Brendan is so good at it because he has done something like it before. So, I watch him because I learn a lot. I don't understand instinc-

'Teen Titans' presents realistic problems that young people can relate to, but grounded in the history of the characters



Justice League junior

Issues Reviewed: Teen Titans #1-5, Teen Titans/Outsiders: Secret Files #1

Writer: Geoff Johns
Pencils: Mike McKone
Published by: DC Comics

By Adrian Dy
2bU! Correspondent

It's a weekend thing? Like Boy Scouts? Whose lame idea was that?

-Superboy

PROBLEMS of your average teenager: Moun-

tains of homework, zits when you least want them, close encounters with the opposite sex, unrealistic expectations of practically everyone older than you, trying to fit in, trying to figure out what "being you" really means.

Problems of your average DC Universe teenager: Mountains of homework, zits when you least want them, close encounters with teammates of the opposite sex, unrealistic expectations of your mentor (you know, people like Batman or Superman or Wonder Woman), crazy assassins trying to kill you, super-villains attacking your school, earth-shaking crises every five minutes or so, and oh, all these while you're still trying to fit in and discover yourself.

That's what it means to be a Teen Titan. Comprising "the next-generation of super-heroes"—Superboy, Wondergirl, Robin and Kid Flash—and their slightly older group of "teachers"—Cyborg, Beast Boy, Starfire and Raven—the Teen Titans are, at first glance,

Justice League junior.

However, while established heroes like Superman and Batman started their careers when they reached adulthood, the entire Teen Titans cast have been superheroes since early adolescence, as seen in their previous comics, "Young Justice," and the earlier incarnation of the Titans.

They're no pushovers, but they've been knocked down several times, have watched close friends die, and have discovered that sometimes, saving the world is a thankless task. Still, someone's got to be able to save the world once the Justice League passes the torch, and they're the ones who are going to do it.

Realistic

The spotlight falls on the four "rising stars" and their individual problems. Writer Geoff Johns of JSA and "The Flash" fame shines here, crafting very realistic problems that teens can relate to, but at the same time, grounding the conflict in the history of the characters.

Superboy is bored silly trying to fit in at Smallville while he tries to come to terms with what it means to be "the Kid of Steel."

Robin tries his best to appear stoic like the unshakable Batman, doing his best to hide his love for his friends. Kid Flash (aka Impulse) is hungry for Flash's approval. Wonder Girl is kicked out of her school for being a pagan (the god Zeus is responsible for her powers, after all).



JUSTICE/C3

ON WORKING with (mostly) computer-generated 'toons: "The vacuum is so intimidating. It's like dancing without a partner. It took me a couple of weeks to adjust."

Making a caffeine pitch

From page C4

showing Katrina sneaking a Nescafé sachet into her ritzy coffee-shop cup. The interpretation? No price is placed on good coffee. True enough, coffee drinking has become a status symbol among the young that its quality has often been mistaken to be similar to its price. Not!

"Kalimutan ang tragedy" was what Spiderman Dan Geromo said when asked about his group's grand prize entry, "Hiroshima." His equally twisted co-creators John Paul Sta. Maria and John Paul Cuison, all also from the State U, wanted to rub out the shock that befell Hiroshima and make it all roses.

of the 12 posters put up for the exhibit, five were products of their hyperactive imagination! The madcap trio are part of the rock band Kiko Machine.

The top three winners got the chance to attend this year's Advertising Congress in Baguio, all expenses paid. But what made it more worth the effort was the P100,000 cash prize for the team that won first place.

Celebrities Toni Leviste, Jake Roxas and Louie Locsin awarded the certificates, while Soul Siren Nina serenaded the crowd with the Nescafé-inspired classic, "Simula." Lexi Schulze hosted the event.

E-mail the author at ness_dctor@yahoo.com

Students
get to
exhibit
their
creative
posters
at Café
Nescafé



GRAND prize winners John Paul Cuison, Dan Ramon Geromo (in Spiderman costume) and John Paul Sta. Maria



NINA



JAKE Roxas (right) awards runners up Conrad Raquel and Katrina Encanto



NESTLÉ'S Kristine Tesoro, Publicis Manila's Jay Reantaso, Hasmin Marable, Ross Bernardo and Lye Alangdeo

Justice League . . .

From page C2

Each of them are instantly likeable and realistic. They sort of remind you of classmates or people you know at school.

Teen Titans is not all about character analysis, though. The kids have barely settled into their digs at Titans Tower when an emergency call from Alcatraz Island provokes them to save lives.

Unknown to them, it's a set-up created by longtime Titans nemesis Deathstroke, who greets the team's latest incarnation by blowing off Kid Flash's kneecap with a shotgun.

From there, it becomes a brawl along the streets of San Francisco, as first the teachers fail to bring Deathstroke down, followed by the kids disobeying orders and taking him on themselves.

The brawl, spread out between issues three to five, is a breathtaking affair, giving readers a chance to see what each character can do.

And though Deathstroke is defeated by a *deus ex machina* appearance by Raven, it's still an awesome opening story arc, immediately establishing just who the Teen Titans are and what their purpose is in the DC Universe.

Spectacular

The art, too, is spectacular, especially in the first issue when the team assembles from all over the United States.

Mike McKone is not a very well-known artist, but he deserves some respect based on his



work here.

There is an awesome two-page spread of Titans Island, just under the Golden Gate Bridge, preceded by scenes set in DC's principal locales, Gotham, Keystone, Gateway and Smallville.

The fight against Deathstroke is pulled off beautifully by him; it's such a cliché to describe comic art by saying "you can feel each punch," but it's justified here, especially the one-on-one duel between Deathstroke and Robin in issue #4.

And continuing with clichés, Geoff demonstrates his ability to create cliffhangers that "make you want to come back for more," but in such a way that you don't feel cheated by the last page, just motivated to buy the next ish.

Issue 1 ends with the shocking revelation that 50 percent of Superboy's genetic material (he's a clone!) comes from Superman, with the remainder coming from... Lex Luthor!

Issue 3 unmasks Deathstroke, and it's someone longtime Titans fans would never have expected. Finally in the latest issue, Wonder Woman interrupts a kiss shared by Wonder Girl and Superboy, telling Wonder Girl to "Get your things... You're going home," in direct violation of the Justice League's "no interference" policy!

By now, Teen Titans #1 has gone through four printings and is consistently one of the hottest books on the market, especially with the premiere of a Teen Titans cartoon in the U.S.

And if upcoming story arcs are any indication, it looks like Teen Titans will continue to be a scorcher. Up next is a Brother Blood arc, followed by a Superboy-Lex Luthor confrontation.

"The goal is to get people excited and get them talking," explains Geoff. "Teen Titans should be one of those books that you can't wait for. I bought 200 copies of #1 out of my own pocket, and when people ask what I do, I hand it to them. So that should show you how happy I am with how it turned out."



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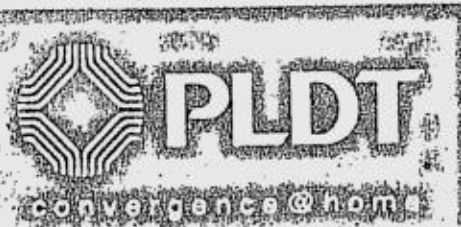
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"HIROSHIMI," grand prize

Making a caffeine pitch

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bUI Correspondent

A SEEMINGLY lazy Monday afternoon recently experienced a unique twist as winners of Nestle Philippines' Ad mo Libre ko poster admaking competition finally went public.

The busy buzz of excited winners, guests and curious onlookers turned the once quaint Café Nescafé on the second floor of Glorietta 3 into a mini-festival. It was sweets and drinks galore for everyone! And all because 12 posters made it out of nearly 1,500 entries.

Ad mo Libre ko is the first admaking competition for Nescafé's newest products, Caramel Mocha and Mocha Java. Early this year, college students from all over the metropolis were asked to form groups of three and challenged to show how well they know their coffee using the bold tagline, "Ibakin Mo to."

More than 500 entries made the first cut. The number was narrowed down to 30, then to five and, finally, to the top three. The students got their first shot at fame when the five entries faced a panel of veteran advertising and marketing specialists at a real boardroom presentation.

UP students Michael Velasco, Benjamin Bermudez and Alan Gerome Garcia won second runner-up with an ad depicting the travails of a student during a difficult exam. The group wanted their entry to be as basic as possible so people could easily relate to it. A fourth member, "guwaping" John Paul Tiangco modeled for the ad (the rules allowed only three people per group).

UP undergraduates Katrina Encanto, Jhoan Medrano and Conrad Raquel bagged the first runner-up spot, with an entry

MAKING/C3



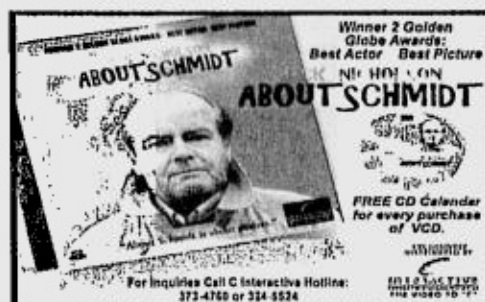
LEXI Schulze interviews Nestle's Lester Tay.

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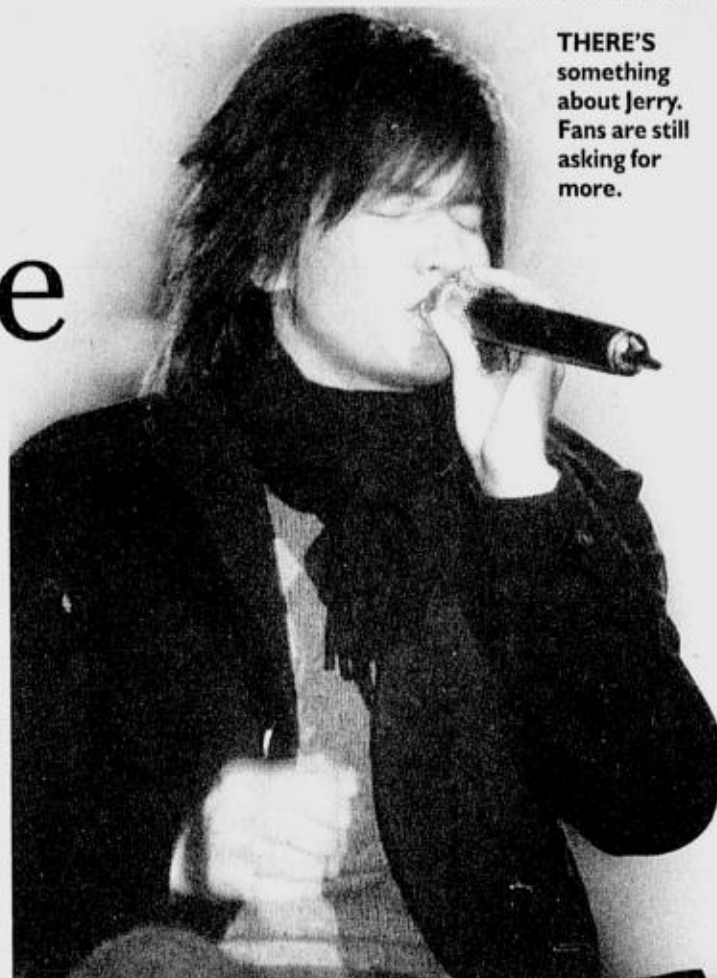


HAAAAAY, it's Zai Zai!
The youngest F4
charmer—Vic Zhou

LIFESTYLE

When all hell broke loose

Jerry Yan and Vic Zhou came, saw and conquered—but the madness continues



THERE'S something about Jerry. Fans are still asking for more.

By Ruth Navarra

LOST voice, sore feet and ripped pants.

I lost my voice from screaming "Jerry, marry me," "Zai Zai, xie xie ni (thank you)" and "Barbie, you're so pretty."

The sore feet I got from my tight sandals and for jumping too much. It didn't help that our cab driver dropped us off at the wrong gate and we had to walk a few kilometers before finding the right one.

The ripped pants? Let's just say I got a little carried away with my jumping and arm flailing in my efforts to attract the attention of Jerry Yan.

And I only found out about this when I was already home and my friend pointed it out to me.

Yet, I am proud of them. They are my battle scars from ABS CBN's "Happy 50 TV" concert. They are my proof that I finally sang along with the real thing and not just with a CD.

Still loving him

Jerry was standing still as a mannequin when the makeshift scaffolding brought him down the stage. It was enough to cause major pandemonium in the crowd.

Hearing the first strains of "Yao Ding Ni," I half expected Jerry to dance with the song, as he had done in his past concerts. But as it turned out, he only sang.

That didn't stop me from swaying my arms in the air, accidentally hitting the head of the woman in front of me (I apologized to her, profusely) and stepping on the feet of my two seat-mates.

Jerry looked so perfect that my friend, a solid Vic Zhou fan, even conceded, "Without any bias, Jerry is a god. Vic is the demi-god. But I prefer the less perfect ones any time."

I argued with her of course. What's wrong with having it all?

After his second song, which was a single from F4's World Tour at Hong Kong, Jerry moved around the stage and reached his hands out to some of the people at the VIP section as he sang his hit, "I Truly Love You."

I swear, tears were dropping from my eyes because I wasn't one of those people who were lucky enough to touch the tips of his beautiful hands.

The crowd enthusiastically joined Jerry in singing his songs, thanks to the Pin Yin text projected at the bottom of each video wall that was scattered across the field. Never mind that they probably couldn't understand the lyrics.

When Ai Ai de las Alas joined Jerry and asked what she thought of the fans who were screaming his name, he promptly replied, "Mahal ko kayo," which caused more uproar in the crowd.

Jerry, who is fond of children, picked a little girl from the side of the stage and carried her for a while—an action that probably gave Jerry's overzealous and over-protective manager major heart palpitations.

Jerry, after being hugged twice by Ai Ai de las Alas, finally gave in to her request for a kiss. The only reason I didn't get the urge to pick up a stone

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and throw it on her direction was the knowledge that she was not interested in him seriously.

Wish comes true

When Vic Zhou, at 22 the youngest member of F4, entered the stage singing "Make a Wish" from his solo album, I got a thrill that even I had to admit was more powerful than what I felt when I saw Jerry.

Nope, I wasn't being unfaithful. I just felt so grateful to God that I finally had seen all the members of F4.

I was hoping that he would deviate from his customary concert get-up (he is usually covered from the neck down) and go for a sexier look. I was sorely disappointed.

After he sang, he introduced himself as Zai Zai, or at least we think he did. There was no interpreter at that time so the first flow of his words was lost on the majority of the crowd, including me.

After his second song, "Love Loves You," he said that he still couldn't believe how big F4 was in the Philippines until he came here and saw it for himself.

He also said that after "Meteor Garden," F4 never had the chance to sing together again. He then proceeded with his final number, which was "The Most Special Existence" from F4's first album, "Meteor Rain."

Vic grinned when he saw Ai Ai walking towards him wearing her final gown for the evening—a long blinding white dress complete with stars and poinsettias.

Ai Ai told him, "Napakaswerte mo dahil ako ang mapapangasawa mo (You are so lucky 'cause you're marrying me)." Vic kept nodding his head while she talked until the interpreter translated what she said. Then his knees buckled and he looked flustered.

Zhou, who is known for his wonderful sense of humor, took Ai Ai's butt-slapping good-naturedly, much to the delight and the jealousy of the fans.

When asked if he could learn a Filipino song, he said that he would have to prepare for years to do that.

Back again

I learned to appreciate Barbie Xu better after she waved at me, twice after the event. I thought she was a real crowd pleaser and deserved to be adored even for a few minutes.

I couldn't care less for her sister Dee, but well, she does grow on you.

The duo of ASOS came out of the stage looking every bit like anime schoolgirls with their long-sleeved shirts, neckties, boots and plaid skirts. The only accessory they wore was the loop earring on their left ear. After their first song, they told the audience that they "missed the Philippines" and that it was "good to be back."

Barbie said that she likes the country because she finds everyone "so warm and so sweet."

Dee, who was sporting a newly dyed blond hair, prompted the audience to shout the phrase, "ASOS, I love you!"—to which the crowd gamely complied.

For their final song, they requested everyone to join them as they sing "Qing Fei Dei Yi," a theme song from "Meteor Garden."

They ended their performance with a promise that they'd be back again.

The next time F4 and ASOS are here (which may be sooner than I think), I'll wear tougher jeans.

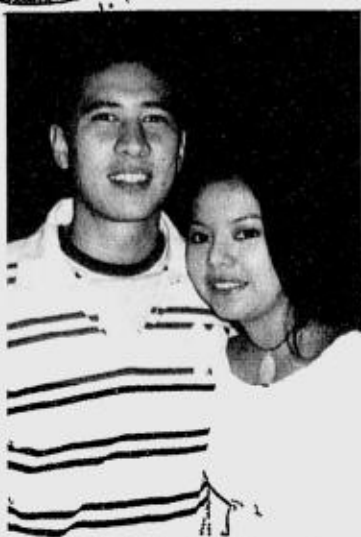
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BAGUIO lovebirds, Antoinette and Carlo Ocampo



BIG FISHES in Pine City, Pixie and Tuck Cheah



FUN addicts, Paolo Trillo and Emma Policarpio



FRIDAY night live with Jackie Forster and JM Rodriguez



COLD play, Julie Carceller and Addict endorser Derek Ramsey



ANONYMOUSLY mixing it. Tina and Ricco Ocampo at the mansion party

Partying in Erap's mansion and dining with Keanu

"THIS is the advertising industry counterpart of the Louis Vuitton party!" I overheard one scene shaker as he sipped his vodka that had been poured by one of the Playboy bunnies in the mansion.

But this was no regular mansion. This was nestled on the hills very close to Baguio's Lookan airport. We almost got lost following the Pine City's countless curves. When we arrived, more curves greeted us in the form of scantily clad (net stockings and red ruffled jacket—actually more sexy casino-dealer than Playboy-bunny look) women who giggled around the three-level enclave.

Not at all related to the alleged homeowner famous for his penchant for wine, women and song, the Addict Mansion party brought to-

gether all of the above, and more. DJ Chris Co-co, who jetted in from UK, the land of the DJs, had his booth by the second-floor railing that overlooked the guests who chose to go around the house, curious about how former President Joseph Estrada lived when he was up north.

Aside from the strict security outside (which added to the feel of exclusivity), and the long driveway leading to the mansion, the "Palace in the High" hills actually looked really simple—like a sparsely decorated villa in the Hamptons. Or okay, Tagaytay Highlands. No over-the-top gold leaf pillars, no giant pool (hey, it's Baguio), no gaudy circular staircase.

The design duo of Miguel Rosales and Ovvian Castrillo re-did the setup to fit the party vibe, making the scene more lush with faux furry fabric that transformed the Erap simple into the Hugh-Hefner decadent. Big Fish's Domini Primero acted as the night's Ron Gallela, taking snapshots of the celebrities—a fair share of industry experts in food, fashion and fun.

DJ Tuck Cheah was limping around (freak accident, according to him) while his wife Pixie was busy taking care of VIP guests. I looked around, and everyone was having so much fun. The bathrooms were always full, too.

A sense of chill pervaded the place, even as the DJ kept pumping in house tunes. The partyphiles wandered around, while some chose to lounge around on the couches by the living room. The bunnies giggled and teased and posed all throughout the night. Booze overflowed. I could get addicted to this.

Keanu was here!

Speaking of addiction, it seems global



GEORGETTE Nepomuceno, Isabel Rocas and Miggy Romero

celebrities are once again getting attracted to the Pearl of the Orient. After Mandy and Mari-ah, and uh, F2, another celeb just landed on our shores. The One, as in Neo, a.k.a. Keanu Reeves, jetted in and out of Manila and nobody knew (okay, maybe a few chosen ones). He was here not for an event or concert, but just to take a break from Hollywood hell. He found his escape in our very own Palawan. (In fact, he may still be there.)

Yes, it is so tiring earning millions of dollars and having to avoid the paparazzi.

I was allowed to have dinner with him, but since these celebs are so strict with photos (you may take a bad angle of theirs, and they're conscious of that), I wasn't able to take a snapshot. His last words: MacArthur's classic "I shall return."

Now, either I am just making this all up or there is, indeed, a glitch in the Matrix.

From Baguio gold to Rockwell's Teak

The premium party crowd have moved back to Rockwell because of Teak, Beaver Lopez's latest pet project in nocturnal affairs.

Lately, jaded scenesters have gained back



BIRTHDAY boy in Baguio, Louie Y and wifey Cecille



PARTY addict Jojo Manlongat



MYRZA Sison

lost hope in the form of this bar. Its vermilion interiors by Jonathan Matti evoke passion, while its al fresco setting spells fresh, especially this season when the weather tends to be more breezy. Perfect for people-watching. The food is something else, too. Their spring rolls are the yummiest that I've tried in this lifetime!

During Teak's opening party, I spotted comedian Bayani Agbayani chitchatting with Aga Muhlach, and I overheard someone comment, "Ang guwapo pala ni Bayani!" Also a regular is Beaver's wife Jackie, who looks so good that seeing her is enough reason to visit the place.

The crowd is a mix of show-biz denizens (G Tongi, back from LA, was there last Friday) and party industry insiders—very similar to Stars before the whole world knew about it. Another plus is DJ Bombi Balquiedra's music—he of the original DJ god notoriety—is the party scene's best-kept musical secret.

This week

Tonight, another Rockwell hotspot marks a milestone. Mati, Geni Psinak's gem of a Greek resto and hip spot, is turning two! Wendell Garcia and Mark Jentes play their own brand of chill, while an open bar and Greek chic food flows the whole night!

Also today, let's feast with Thai Vietnamese flavors at Café Via Mare Alabang, with guest chef Tina Pamintuan, fresh from Saigon! Her run as Miss Saigon is from today until Sunday, so if you're craving for something spicy—let chef Tina bring it on for you.

Next Tuesday, stay at the Rockwell strip and head over to Dish—it's the MTV Voting party (as a countdown to and launch for the MTV Asia Awards, which happens on Valentine's Day 2004 in Singapore!).

"Love is All Around" is the heartwarming theme, so expect a lot of love potions that night. And while you're at it, maybe you'll meet your match in time for the holidays, too.



SUPER style it! Kara Tolentino, Ovvian Castrillo and Miguel Rosales



MINISTRY of Sound at Big Fish, DJ Mauro Picotto, Big Fish resident DJ TC and Domini Primero



JUST shop at Shu, Shu Uemura's Tina Tinio, Xeng Zulueta and Jenni Epperson



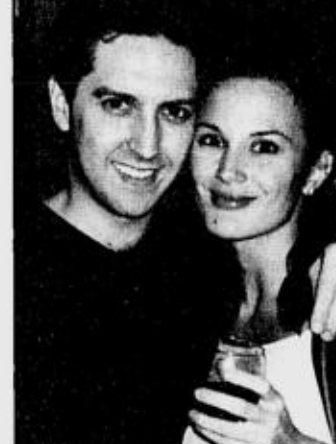
WHEREELSE'S Marcel Crespo and Faith Lavarro



SCENE movers, Pinky Webb and David Jacob



AGELESS FUNK, Juliet and Mimi Tan



ROYAL pair, Juan Elizalde and Bianca Araneta



YAPARAZZI with director du jour Robbie Dinglasan

Beauty secrets from the kitchen

I ONCE bumped into a 30-something lady with the smoothest, clearest, most supple skin I had ever seen—a blemish-free, unlined complexion that seemed to have escaped the cruelty of aging, stress and pollution.

When I asked her about her beauty regimen, I expected to hear a slew of products from high-end international beauty houses. But instead of a rundown of La Mer and its equally pricey buddies, her "beauty secret" was a shocking revelation—she had been using Perla for the past decade or so.

You read that right. Perla. The laundry bar. Yup, as a facial wash. I can imagine the number of eyebrows raising at this very moment.

The moral of the story? No, not to run to the nearest sari-sari store and grab the first detergent bar you can lay your hands on and scrub your face with it. My personal beauty urban legend just proves that when it comes to quality and performance, the best options aren't always the above-P1,000 products that have been extracted from some exotic plant nobody has even heard of.

If something as unassuming as a bar of laundry soap can work wonders, imagine the possibilities lying around in your own home.

A while back, I gave you a list



Lora Gabol

of beauty secrets that won't break the bank. Now I'm sharing something better—beauty "products" that won't even put a dent on your account!

Get ready to raid your cupboards and fridge because this time, I'll be giving you a session of pampering that won't cost you anything beyond loose change.

Kitchen hair treatments

Conditioning egg hair mask

For intense hydration and instant shine, try this quick and easy hair "mask."

Whisk a whole egg until it gets foamy, then add a tablespoon of lemon juice (fresh is always best!). Wet hair, massage the mixture onto your hair and scalp, then put on a shower cap for 10-15 minutes.

Afterwards, rinse hair, then shampoo and condition as usual. The protein in eggs translates to

moisture, and we all know moisture can only do our abused strands good. The citrus extracts from the lemon put in the shiny effect, so you not only get soft, silky hair, but a pretty sheen as well.

Avocado and egg yolk treatment
If your strands are extra dry and frizzy, you need a heavy-duty moisturizing treatment you can do at home. Forget about "mayonaisse magic," which leaves your hair soft but stinky. This fruity alternative works just as well.

Mash half an avocado (use the whole fruit if you have long hair), and add one whole egg yolk. Massage the mixture on hair, concentrating more on dry ends. Leave on for about 20 minutes, rinse off, shampoo and condition.

The high fat content in avocados plus the protein in the rich egg yolk are the best ingredients for rebuilding damaged hair shafts and repairing split ends. The avocado smells delicious, too.

The "liquid gold hot oil"

Want to smoothen rough strands and relax rebellious hair? Try the beauty secret of the goddess: olive oil.

Mix olive oil (just enough for your hair length) with one egg yolk. Again, apply the mixture on your hair, giving extra attention to the ends. Put on a shower cap (the extra heat will help the good stuff penetrate better), then rinse

If an unassuming bar of laundry soap can work wonders on skin, imagine the possibilities lying around in your own home

the mixture off after 15 minutes. Shampoo and condition, of course. Slightly heating the oil will also help, and so will doing the process while taking a hot shower.

Citrus highlights

Want natural highlights? "Streak" sections of your hair with lemon juice (use a rattail comb or a fine paintbrush), go out in the sun for a while, and watch your strands get naturally sun-bleached. Try this at the beach and get that beach-babe look without the salon appointment.

'Edible' facials

Calamansi skin brightener

Why spend on whitening

creams when you can concoct your own lightening potion at home?

Squeeze a couple of juicy calamansi, then mix the juice with enough evaporated milk (enough isn't a lot!) to thicken the mixture. Apply on your face and neck (or anywhere you wish!) with a cotton ball, then leave on for as long as you can stand having it on (some even do it overnight!).

Wash off and say hello to instantly brighter skin. The lactic acid in milk has an exfoliating action, while calamansi is a natural astringent. This makes the team-up a tough one to beat in terms of whitening!

Oatmeal face treatments

Oatmeal can be used to treat any type of skin. Just add the right "partner," and you've got a facial for practically every skin concern. Apply the mask on clean skin, leave on for 30 minutes, then rinse off.

For oily skin: Try mixing oatmeal with egg white for some major grease-busting. Both oatmeal and egg whites sop up excess sebum like a sponge, clearing oil and shine from the surface of skin.

For dry skin: Honey and oatmeal are your best bets in restoring softness and moisture. Oatmeal acts as a natural exfoliant by being a grainy scrub, while honey contains natural emollients to

moisturize skin.

Blemish-fighting banana

Plagued with pimples and whiteheads? Grab a banana and a cup of plain yogurt (forget the cinnamon-apple flavored ones). Mash the banana and simply add a few tablespoons of the yogurt to make a paste. Use it as a facial mask up to twice a week to kill acne-causing bacteria with the potassium in bananas, and gently unclog pores with the lactic acid in yogurt.

Natural sugar scrub

Scrubs cost an arm and a leg these days. Instead of a luxurious exfoliant, why not try fine sugar and olive oil instead? This non-abrasive sweet treat will get rid of flaky skin in a jiffy. You can use it on your body, too!

Sweet lips

Use a little honey to moisturize lips and give it a healthy, natural shine no lip gloss can beat.

Potato peepers

While cool cucumbers are effective de-puffers after a late night, chilled potato slices dipped in cold milk will also de-stress tired eyes. The milk helps moisturize the eye area as well, plumping up skin to disguise fine lines.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

Vanness Wu catches his falling star, but not quite

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bUI Correspondent

NOW that the "Meteor Garden" fever seems to have subsided, you thought you've seen the last of Vanness Wu. As the suave Mei Zhuo in "Meteor Garden," he made the series' fans either love him or hate him for having such irritatingly perfect hair.

But in his first-ever movie, the action/romance/comedy flick "Star Runner," you'll either love him or hate his leading lady—or both, in my case. And for darn good reason, too; he's shed his "reboned" look and now sports little-boy locks, making him undeniably hotter than ever. Not to mention the fact that he literally kicks major behinds till next Tuesday with his awesome martial arts moves.

But is that really enough to make you sit through the entire film? Maybe yes, maybe no.

"Star Runner" refers to the widely publicized kickboxing competition entered by rookies and champs from across the globe. Bond (Wu), a free-spirited but ambitious student, dreams of making it to the championship until a young Korean professor, May Kim (Korean actress Kim Hyun-Joo), enters his life. Driven by a newfound surge of inspiration, he braves all odds and, together with his love interest and a ragtag team of supporters, finally comes face to face with the ultimate fight of his life.

Exasperatingly funny

The plot (if there really is any) is eerily reminiscent of the classic "Karate Kid" storyline. Boy meets girl, boy gets into trouble, boy trains with unknown guru, boy kicks butt and inevitably gets the girl. Same hackneyed formula, same predictable ending. Or is it?

Despite its shallowness, the plot does throw in a surprise twist or two, although it'll probably make you say, "What the...!" rather than impress you. As for the comedy part, the film will tickle your funny bone every now and then, but most of the time you'll probably laugh in sheer exasperation even if it's not trying to be funny.

Holding up

A romantic-action movie is already a lot to handle. But how do the actors fare? Wu surprisingly holds up his own, which means all that tough training has indeed paid off. Rumor has it that he (as well as some co-stars) lost a few pounds in a matter of days, due to intense training. Never mind that he wears the same brooding expression all throughout the movie. He may be no Bruce Lee, but hey, you've got to admire his spirit. And his toned chest. And... well, you get the picture.

Meanwhile, Kim Hyun-Joo fits the typical damsel-in-perennial-distress role to a T. Too bad for her, her help-less character doesn't seem to have much substance. She shows her weakness when her character's estranged (but married) lover returns and she runs back to him willy-nilly, as if Bond never existed. Then when her lover asks her to come back with him to Korea, she hesitates and thinks of Bond. *Ano ba talaga, kuya?* For Pete's sake, girl, make up your mind!

At least the character of the antagonist is defined by something other than the usual bloodlust. The indestructible champion Tank, played by Andy Onn, lends some saving grace to the film with his smooth, devil-may-care punches and swing kicks. Don't go thinking this dude is just on a killing rampage, though. While Bond turns to his comatose grandfather for some inspiration, Tank is also driven by a desire to live up to the expectations of his older brother, a legendary boxer. Kinda makes you think twice about whom to root for.



WU and Kim's love story wanes in the face of adversity.

Cheese and crackers

And, of course, there are the *kilig* scenes. True to the spirit of romance flicks, the film-makers laid on the mush factor pretty thick—maybe a little too thick. Many a teenybopper uttered strangled wails when Kim slow-danced with Wu in the movie, while smart alecks guffawed loudly at every sappy cliché. Then again, despite cynic outbursts from bored audience members, Wu invariably pulls a heartstring or two with the line, "Don't you ever ask me to leave" while Kim reaches up and brushes his hair away from his face ever so gently. Cheese and crackers, anyone?

Potentially entertaining

Ogling and swooning aside, there really isn't much of the whole movie to rave about that one can't help but wonder where the HK\$60-million budget went. (I heard they had to "borrow" an ornate train and recreate the whole mid-'40s setting, but that's another story.) It had potential entertainment value, but my amusement died somewhere between the disappointing dubbing and the annoying finale. Fortunately for me, it only took the sight of Vanness jogging shirtless in the rain to glue me to my seat for an hour and a half. But in fairness, the movie wasn't half bad—it just needed a little kick, pun intended.

So who wins the championship and earns the coveted title of "Star Runner"? Go figure. No, really. Watch the movie and go nuts trying to figure it out.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@hotmail.com.

JEDI KNIGHT strikes back

By Jeffrey Pe Benito
2bUI Correspondent

HUNDREDS of simple-minded soldiers are after your guts, and they are armed with guns and arrows that are either molecularly charged, electrically amped or rocket-loaded.

Various species of monstrosities seem to be drawn to your presence as you tour the galaxy, and all seem to have a strange appetite for your head. 50-ft metallic bipeds want to squash the lights out of you in a hailstorm, a five-ton exceptionally toothy creature wants you for dessert in a prison, an overgrown earthworm from hell is bored in his lonely little planet and wants to play catch.

And oh, a mysterious power is at work, plotting to topple the order of the universe.

You draw your twin lightsabers. They have it coming.

In the videogame Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy, you play as Jaden Korr, a Kel Dor padawan under the tutelage of Kyle Katarn, the character from the previous Jedi Knight titles.

You start out with hardly any moves and abilities, just a lightsaber with a story and a bratty co-trainee, Rosh. As you train under the Jedi Academy to defend the peace of the galaxy, you find out that the force powers of various planets are being drained by minions toward an evidently powerful force.

You choose from a set of missions, ranging from the ridiculous to the intense, and with each task you accomplish, you both master your powers and slowly uncover that the new order is in peril, and that it is again up to the Jedi to stop the powers at work.

Complete arsenal

The result packs a punch—or in this case, a saber stab. You have every imaginable weapon to wreak havoc with, from multidirectional bows to rapid firing blasters to thermal detonators. Yes, the Star Wars arsenal is complete and at your disposal.

You have all kinds of moves as well to prove just how powerful the Jedi are; you can walk on walls, jump 12 times your height, take a horizontal record-breaking leap and strike a pose while your twin sabers encircle you, killing every-

thing in sight.

Perhaps even better, you can use the Force to push enemies off ledges, control others and make them jump to their deaths, electrocute, crush, slice and dice all that stand in the way to defend all that is precious. Or you can just prove you're a royal bully.

Either way, there is some measure of freedom in the game; there are countless ways to use your Jedi movement, lightsaber and force powers, and a good number of different styles that will prove to be efficient.

It also pays to experiment; the efficiency of the force powers vary with the different stages, opponents and missions. You can use the mind-trick ability when what's-his-face with a huge claw comes after you; you can use the lightning ability when you're surrounded; the drain ability comes in handy you're running low on life. Or you can crush the bones, electrocute and drain the life out of a puny imperial soldier after he surrenders, just for the sheer joy of it.

So if thus far, you can



SO you want to be a hero. Go ahead. Take on armies using only your blaster. Good luck getting past this, uhm, minor obstacle.

imagine a bit of variety in the game, the stages offer a range of trials as well. You get to use your saber while you're on a pod similar to Anakin's racer from "The Phantom Menace." You can ride—for non-Star Wars fans—a Kangaroo-like creature while you're chased by dozens of soldiers and mechanical sentries. You infiltrate a moving airship, shake hands and work hand in hand with an anonymous Wookiee called Chewbacca, and rescue a droid from hundreds of creatures who favor spears.

You play tag with a snake-like creature "Tremors"-style, disarm bombs a la Metal Gear, and you have at it with a Rancor like the Jedis before you. Don't let the fact

that all of this has been done before fool you; the missions are good clean fun, or perhaps, if the dark force runs strong in your veins, a bloody mess.

Constricted plotline

This could very well be the pinnacle of gaming.

It isn't. Maybe the reason is, for all the physical freedom, the plotline is just too constricted. Maybe after you've hacked and slashed 50 odd-looking creatures, No. 51 doesn't really seem as much fun to slaughter.

Maybe seeing you control the mind of one soldier, having that soldier take out one battalion while they don't fight back seems a bit too nuts, even for a world with English-speaking Coruscants.

Maybe Master Skywalker, taking on Yoda's footsteps, seems excessively diminished. Maybe it seems like Lucas Arts just wants to make every dime it can with slight improvements of the same game.

Maybe the story is too shallow to really be involving, maybe the great action takes too much

away from lucid storytelling, maybe we've all just seen too many complex Solid Snakes for simpletons like Jaden Korr to seem interesting.

It's certainly not going to be one of the best games of the year. It might not even be the most interesting release of the quarter.

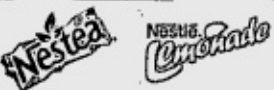
But Jedi Academy is one of the most compelling Star Wars games to date. It reeks of the Star Wars universe, from the grandeur of the sceneries to the array of the species to the lightsaber laser-blocking.

So gear up. Somewhere in the universe right now, a Hutt is smiling smugly after his crime spree. It's time to wipe that silly smile off his face.

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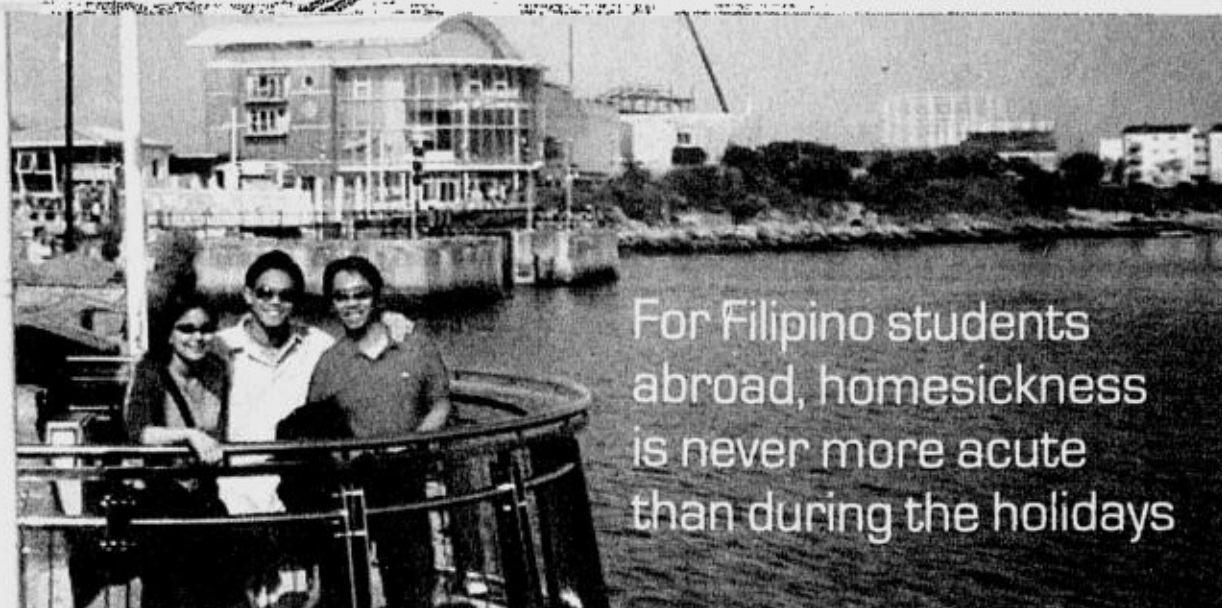
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FILIPINO students in the UK on a visit to Plymouth Barbican

LIFESTYLE



For Filipino students abroad, homesickness is never more acute than during the holidays

Far from home on Christmas

By Beia Formoso

SOME people dream about studying abroad—being totally independent, living in an unfamiliar place, meeting all kinds of people, getting to know another culture, entering a whole new world.

Well, that dream isn't as farfetched as you may think, with Thames International Business School giving Filipino students the opportunity to earn a foreign degree in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada or Singapore.

I was fortunate to get a glimpse of a foreign student's life when I hung out with Thames students who studied in different towns in England, and even stayed in their house (yes, their very own house, not a dorm!). There is much to admire about these friendly and accommodating young adults who are making it on their own in the "outside" world.

Theresa Leung, Abby Baltazar, Alex Arel

FAR/E2

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5252 Series of 2003

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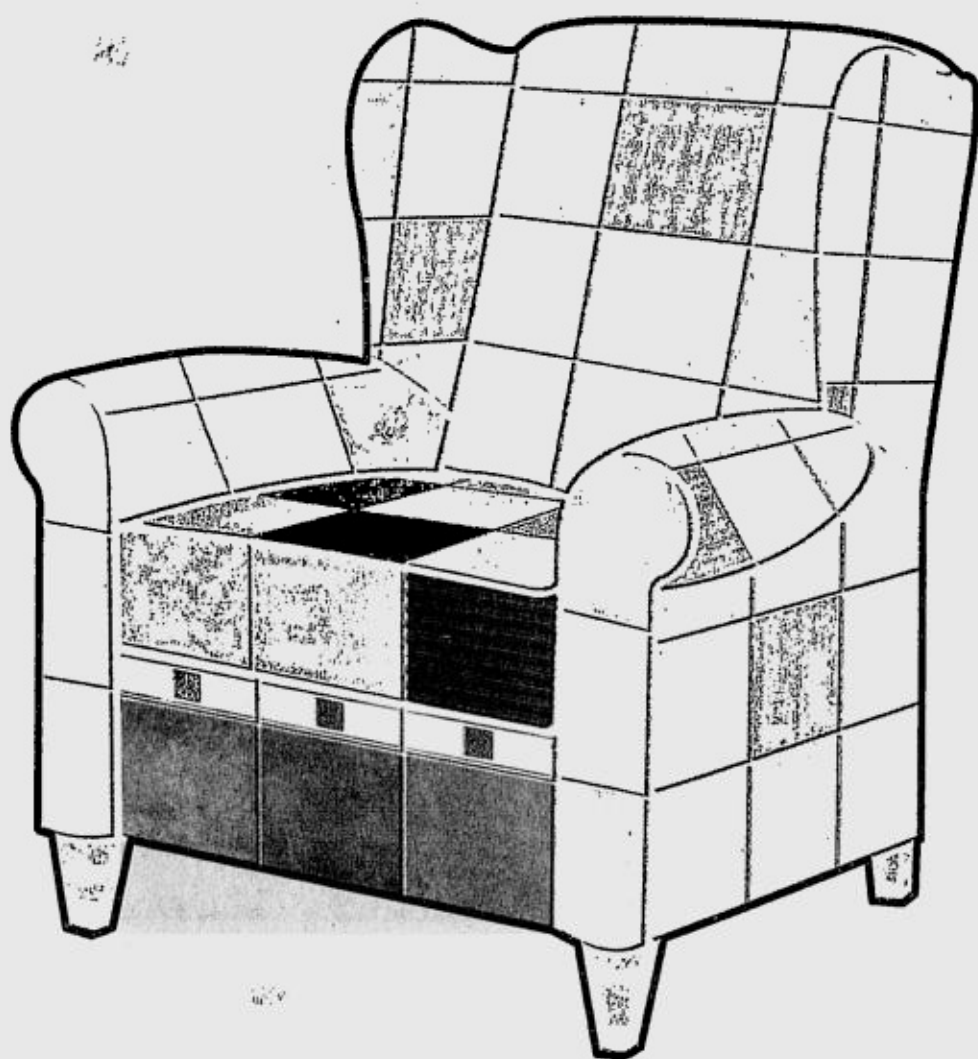


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2 LOGO LOVE	12 LOGO DRAGON
3 LOGO TOOSEXY	13 MR. SUAVE
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5 LOGO SEXYMA	15 LOGO SCORPION
6 YOU ME	16 LOGO ANGELEYE
7 LOGO LUVROSE	17 LOGO ZHARIS
8 LOGO LOVE	18 LOGO CUPIDS
9 LOGO SKULLFIRE	19 LOGO HARTROSE
10 LOGO LUVBIRDS	20 LOGO LUVCHAIN

1 Mr. Suave Parokya Ni Edgar TONE MRSUAVE	11 I Want You Thalia & Fat Joe TONE IWANTU
2 Spaghetti Song Sexton TONE SPAG	12 Mr. Suave Ver. 2 Parokya Ni Edgar TONE MRSUAVE2
3 Maybe Enrique Iglesias TONE MAYBE	13 Make A Wish Vic Zhou TONE MAKEWISH
4 Where Is The Love Black Eyed Peas TONE WERISLUV	14 Pare Ko Eraserheads TONE PAREKO
5 I'll Be Edwin McCain TONE IBE	15 Gold Spandau Ballet TONE GOLD
6 Happy Rolling Stones TONE HAPPY	16 Perfect True Faith TONE PERFECT
7 Unwell Matchbox 20 TONE UNWELL	17 Baby I'm In Love Thalia TONE BABYIM
8 Awit Ng Kabataan Rivermaya TONE KABATAAN	18 Broken Vow Lara Fabian TONE BROKEN
9 Joy To The World Traditional Artist TONE JOYWORLD	19 Get Busy Sean Paul TONE GETBUSY
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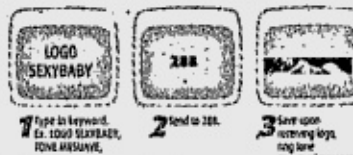
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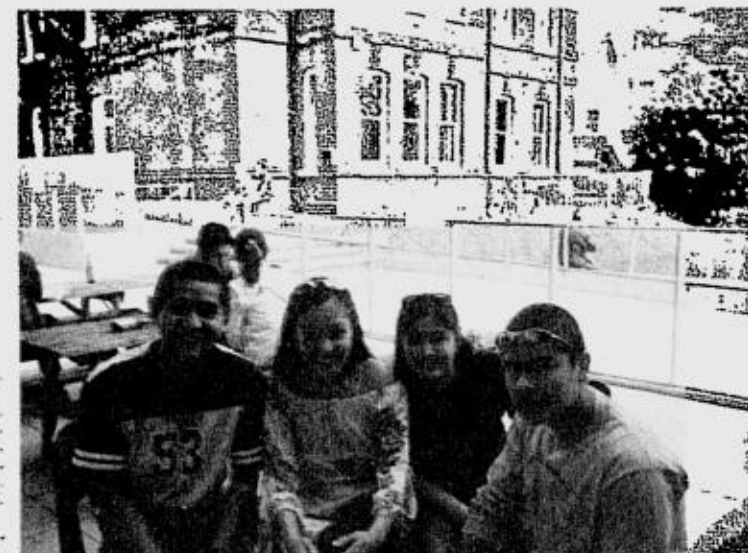
Far from home on Christmas



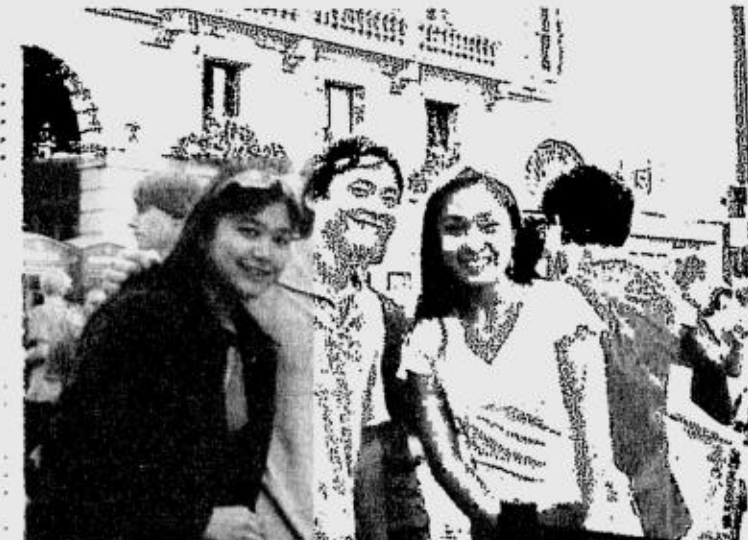
HANGING out with friends



WHAT'S cooking?



THESE guys will be spending Christmas in Portsmouth.



ENJOYING their day trip to London



AT A Pinoy fair

From page E1

Iano, Mark Seng, Kristine Barangan, Russell Vergara and Lora Weishoff were just a few of the students who took us around their respective universities and towns.

Leung, Baltazar and Arellano are University of Portsmouth students. Seng and Barangan go to Middlesex near London. Vergara is taking up Fine Arts at the College of Design in Chelsea. Weishoff is a graduating student of Oxford-Brookes.

Speaking with accent

They showed us their schools, their favorite places to eat (usually Chinese, as the Filipino in them craves for rice), where they worked, the trains and buses they took and more than enough sampling of the British accent they had acquired (they had to talk that way to be understood).

Homesickness for family and friends is a given, so they find solace in each other and have become like a second family. Some students also make friends with the Filipino community nearby (there is a lot of us in the United Kingdom).

Not to be underestimated is how much they miss Filipino food. Even just "Mang Tomas" (lechon sarsa) mixed with plain rice is enough to satisfy their Pinoy tastebuds.

Getting through everyday life is tough enough when living abroad, but what about during the holidays? Homesickness is never more acute than at Christmastime. While some of the students are able to come home to the Philippines for the Christmas break, most have no choice but to remain away from their loved ones.

So how do the Filipino students celebrate Christmas in the UK? Well, they've traded the sweet ham and queso de bola for the traditional English meal of turkey, minced pies, lollies and wine.

Last year the students got together in London, this year they will gather in Portsmouth (where they have their own house). New Year's Eve is a different story, with some of them partying in fashionable places like Paris and Milan.

Sharing a house

While majority of the Thames students live in campus dorms, a number of them decided to pool their money and live together in a house. Renting a house, they found out, was less expensive than staying in dorms, and they didn't want to be separated since they had grown close (after all, all they've got is each other in this foreign land).

There is also more freedom—no rules, no curfews, no restrictions whatsoever, hence, it's more fun! Of course, living on your own entails paying household bills, grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning but, staying with these kids, you see first hand how they've stepped up to the responsibility (although the cleanliness part needs a bit more work).

Though it may be fun living abroad, it's still hard work, these students have found out. This isn't simply in the academic sense. Most foreign students take on a job to help pay for their studies or for extra cash for traveling and shopping. The jobs range from working at clothes boutiques, do-it-yourself warehouses, construction sites, to restaurants and Starbucks.

They explain that the allowance their parents send is enough to cover basic necessities like food, shelter and textbooks but, when you're already staying in one country in Europe, you have to see the rest of it! You can practically go anywhere on the continent by train. During weekends and holidays, you'll find these youngsters chillin' in London or partying in Ibiza.

It isn't easy to balance work, school and play; nor to keep one's priorities straight with all of the freedom in living away from home. But these students make their families proud of what they achieve in the academic arena and bring home a wealth of knowledge and the unique experience of studying abroad.

Such is the foreign student's life for these kids. As Theresa would say, "Cheers!"



AT OXFORD



CHILLING at Plymouth



CATCHING the sun at South Sea



AT MOBY'S show



AT A Ministry of Sound gig



SHOPPING in London

Lessons in nation rebuilding

By Margot Aissa C. Tan
2bUI Correspondent

ON Nov. 29, young people from all over Metro Manila gathered at the Li Seng Giap Auditorium of the University of Asia and the Pacific for workshops organized by satellite organizations of the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations (HPAIR) of the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, and UA&P.

The sessions, moderated by writer Ruel de Vera and television personality Kara David, served as an avenue for discussion among students, leaders and well-known personalities who have contributed to the transformation of the country.

Speakers, particularly Butch Jimenez, vice president for media and communications of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone company, and John Paul Tanchanco, president and founder, Chimara Neo-Vegan Café, stressed the need to harness the youth's capabilities in initiating positive changes in Philippine institutions and reshaping the country's business landscape through Filipino innovation and creative entrepreneurship. This was especially important because of globalization and intense competition among countries.

Young people, who are the future leaders, need guidance in sifting through various types of information that are sometimes conflicting and confusing.

Some of the lessons participants learned during the whole day session are:

Lesson 1: Keep the spirit of nationalism alive.

If they do not plan to do anything to correct inequities in the country or, worse, are even helping those who are perpetuating the injustices, they should get out.

Television personality Cheche Lazaro, executive producer of Probe Productions, proved to be an inspiration and a real model of what idealism and love for country means. More important than active participation and vigilance, the country needs the fervent and sincere kind of nationalism Filipinos once had.

Lesson 2: Read more and make informed decisions.

In opening the workshop, Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority, stressed the importance of reading and keeping abreast of developments. He said he believed so much in the value of information that, as mayor of Marikina, he put up a library that was open to employees and anyone who was interested. A good book will always be one of the best investments an entrepreneur can make regardless of how successful he or she is. To succeed, they must not lose their drive to learn and innovate.

Lesson 3: Know the value of sacrifice and have the courage of your convictions.

Budjette Tan, president of Alamat Comics, sold only one copy of his publication when he was just starting, but he persevered. Many successful people got to where they are now by never giving up and their willingness to sacrifice.

Lesson 4: Chart your own course and establish your territory.

Chit Juan, the woman behind Figaro, stressed the need for entrepreneurs to do the things they love to do. She said there was not one path to success. Everyone had to find his/her own niche and specialize in that particular field. Bam Aquino, head of the National Youth Commission, pointed out that the outstanding organizations that had been honored by his agency were those that were able to achieve their goals by doing things their own special way.

Knowing where one's talents lie and using them to advantage will most often spell success.

Lesson 5: Stick to your principles—it's the only way to go.

People thought Michael Tan, a UP professor and INQUIRER columnist, was too honest to become a businessman so he went into teaching. But Lory Tan, director of Bookmark and The Filipino Bookstore, said values and entrepreneurship were not always incompatible.

Lory, who is also president of the World Wildlife Fund-Philippines, said it was not impossible to earn a living, contribute to society, and transform the system while preserving one's principles and values. Difficult or improbable, but not impossible, he stressed. He told the workshop participants that when push came to shove, they must believe that only the good way could be the right way.



INQUIRER columnist Conrado de Quiros meets his fan club.



UP HPAIR president Maida Salcedo, INQUIRER corporate relations manager Celine Madamba, Cheche Lazaro, Lory Tan, Butch Jimenez, Bam Aquino and INQUIRER president Sandy Romualdez.

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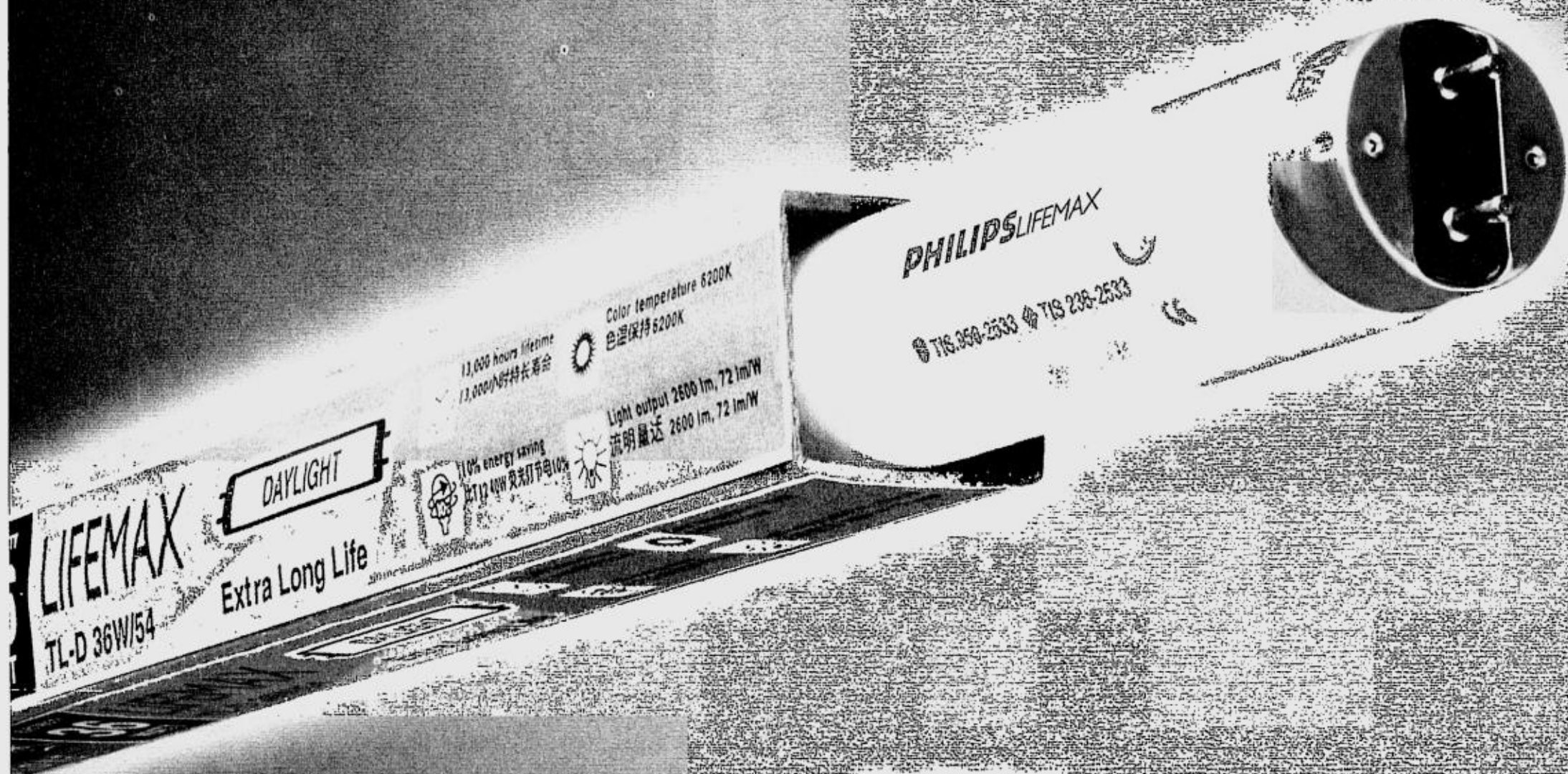
INQUIRER columnist Michael Tan



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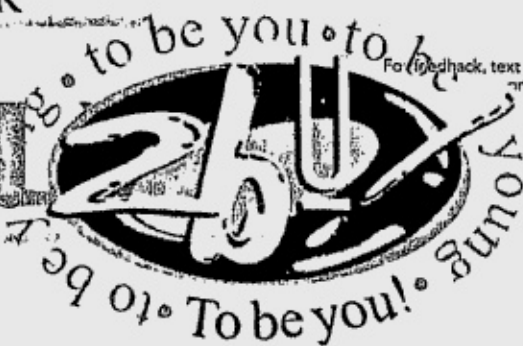
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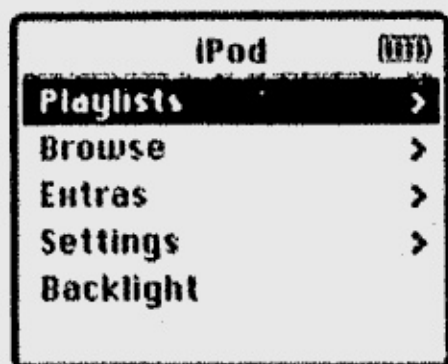
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By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

MUSIC lovers, listen up! Bump off Spin's Top 100 Albums of the Year off the top of your Christmas wish list. The new iPod deserves to sit on No. 1.

The iPod initially works like a Discman. You've got your rewind, forward, pause and play keys. It's so user-friendly, Fred Flinstone could work this baby. Getting the songs in it, though, could pose a problem for him.

See, the iPod works like an external hard drive—think of it as a sleeker Zip disk. And to get your music to your iPod means hooking it up to a computer.

The drawback is that the iPod, though compatible with a PC (not all Apple users should get all the fun!), needs a USB2 or firewire port. While new computers and laptops come with these ports, purchasing one can set you back anywhere between P2,000-P5,000.

Listening bliss

Once you've solved that little problem, however, you're well on your way to 8-10 hours of music-listening bliss.

Transferring your songs to the iPod is a simple click-and-drag process, thanks to iTunes (which you can download for free on the Apple website. And yes, it works for PCs, too).

Save for .wma files, it can take in any audio format—although we highly recommend advanced audio codex (.aac), since the sound quality is better than MP3 and saves as a smaller file.

Here's the awesome part: Depending on the number of songs you're transferring, it

takes less than five minutes to get that Norah Jones album to your iPod, which is so much more convenient than burning yourself a copy on CD. And since iPods come in 10, 20, or 40 gigabytes, well, that just beats your entire CD collection (think 2,500 songs for the 10 GB, and 10,000 songs for the 40 GB).

The latest iPod, a third-generation beauty, boasts touch-sensitive keys, but no need to worry about accidentally skipping tracks; a "Hold" key keeps your music playing non-stop.

Almost like a PDA

You can also create playlists on your computer and transfer them to your iPod—although that sucks a bit, since you can't create playlists directly on the iPod itself.

You can create an "On-the-Go" playlist on the machine, which only holds those songs until you turn the iPod off—then it's time to kiss that list goodbye. It does, however, sort out songs by artist, song, album, composer and genre (that is, if you fill out all the information prior to transferring the song), so there's no need to fuss about having to go through a gazillion songs before finding that Blink 182 track.

Another cool feature is that it works like a PDA, only you can't directly input information (it is first and foremost a music player, people).

Through your PC, though, you get to put in your schedule, notes, and contacts. It even has an alarm clock as well as a sleep timer.

But the extra feature that makes this iPod rock would have to be the games. As of now there are four games: "Brick," "Music Quiz" (guess what song's playing, using the songs in the hard drive), "Parachute," and "Solitaire."

Sure, the graphics aren't exactly 3D-material (think pixelated video games of the very early '80s), but hey, as we said, it's a music player. How many MP3 players can do that?

Pretty up your iPod

Gadget freaks know this: It's all about accessorizing. Owning a computer without speakers is like buying sneakers without the laces. And what better way to maximize your iPod than getting accessories for your new little toy?

Apple has revamped the look of the iPod and given it a sleeker finish, but you can certainly jazz it up to your specifications. Technology company Belkin makes dressing up iPods fun and easy, although not exactly light on your pocket.

They've got leather cases, clear cases, car kits, speakers, headphones, and battery pack docks to make your baby the subject of every other iPod owner's envy, but be ready to shell out about \$49.99 for each new addition.

Future releases include a Media Reader, which will enable you to store images in your iPod (perfect for shutterbugs who always find themselves using up their digi-cam's memory on location), the Mobile FM Reader, the Mobile Cassette Adaptor, and the Voice Recorder.

You even get to personalize your iPod—the catch is, you can't put in your name, but a saying or a quote. You even get to connect with other iPod users online.

Log on to www.ipodlaughs.com and share silly engraving suggestions, or join in "iAshamed," where you submit the song you ought to have deleted a long time ago. There's even a fansite where you get to submit photos of you holding up your iPod by a historical place.

And how much does this amazing machine cost? A 10 GB goes for P20,890, while the 20 GB sells at P26,580, and the 40 GB at P33,680.

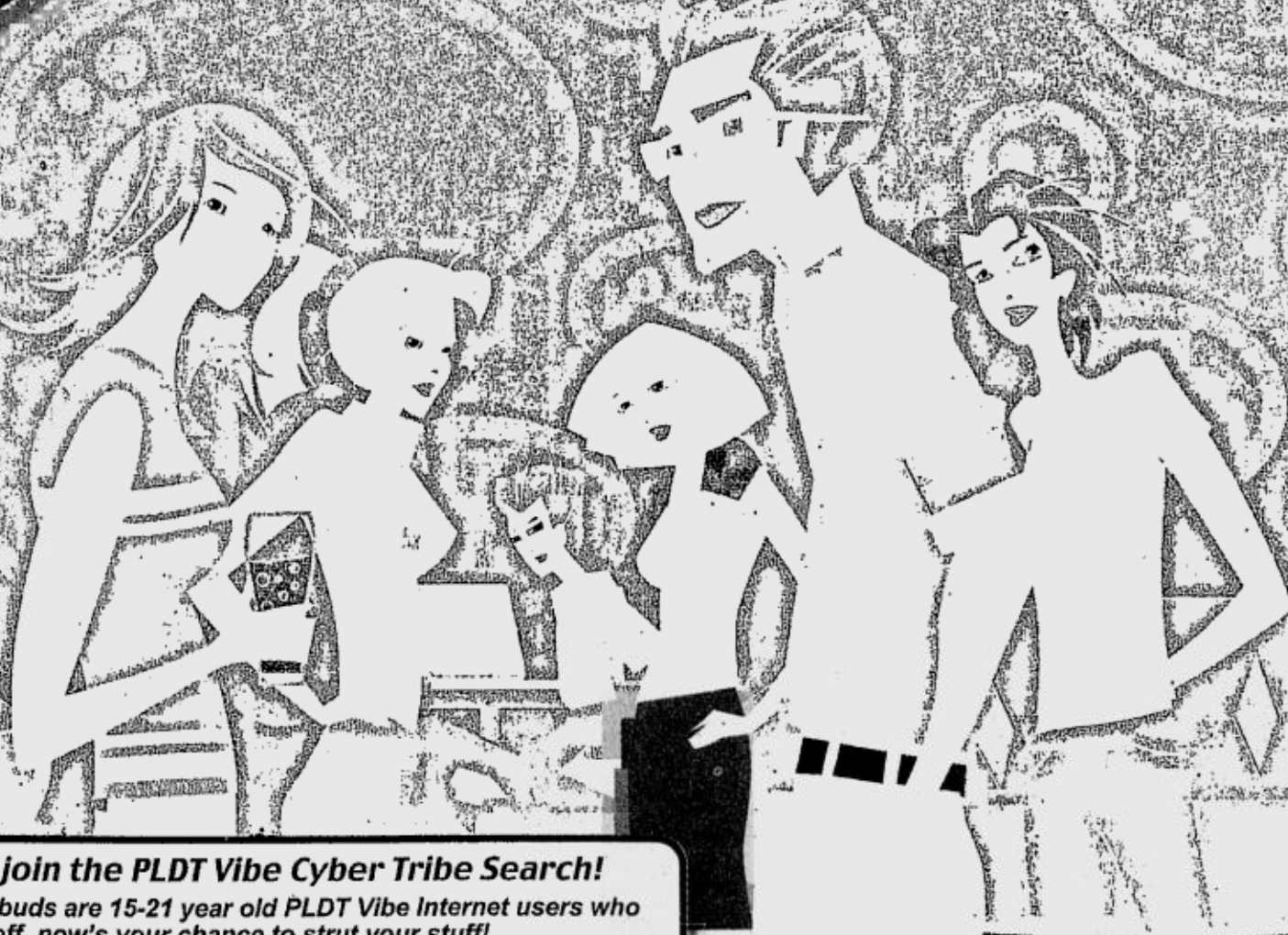
And no longer do you have to scrounge the yellow pages for the Apple dealer nearest you. The iPod is now available at computer stores nationwide, and soon, even at appliance stores.

So it costs a bit more than you'd expect, but hey, Time Magazine didn't call it "Machine of the Year" for nothing.

E-mail the author at volcanogirl28@yahoo.com.



How cool is your crew?



Get your vibe on with your buds and join the PLDT Vibe Cyber Tribe Search!

The hunt for the hippest tribe is on! If you and your buds are 15-21 year old PLDT Vibe Internet users who are slick, smart, and savvy online and off, now's your chance to strut your stuff!

TO JOIN THE SEARCH:

1. Form a tribe of 5-10 members.
2. Log on to www.pldtvibetribe.com. Click JOIN and follow the instructions.
3. The 10 tribes with the most number of votes will compete in a battle of brains and brawn in the PLDT Vibe Cyber Tribe Search Finals on March 6, 2004.

The chosen tribe goes to Boracay, runs away with P50,000 cash and gets to be seen on MTV!

It's time to get cracking! Mark these dates on your calendar:
 Online Search - December 10, 2003 - February 10, 2004
 Search Finals - March 6, 2004

See flyers for details



Join by logging on to www.pldtvibetribe.com



FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA



MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY R.M. JUNIOR



BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You want to find something in life worthy of your devotion. You are fond of animals, you appreciate nature and you hunger for higher learning and understanding. Essentially, you are a spiritual person. Nevertheless, you can party with the best of them. An exciting year lies ahead because it is full of many fresh, adventurous beginnings.

Birthdate of: Emily Dickinson, poet; Kenneth Branagh, actor; Nia Peeples, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be careful you don't make promises at work today that you will later regret. You're feeling very big about things, and you're tempted to make a grand gesture.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your optimism about financial speculation could be valid; however, there's a strong chance it is unrealistically optimistic. You're inclined to inflate things today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with partners and spouses are excellent today. You're willing to go more than halfway to get things done or to reach an agreement. Bravo!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have a lot of energy to get ahead in whatever you want to do today. Your positive attitude about things (especially at work) attracts people to your cause. Go for it!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): By nature, you are generous and dramatic. Be careful you don't go overboard picking up the tab for fun events today just because you intend to enjoy yourself with gusto!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Make an effort to understand where others are coming from today. You might be so focused on your own point of view that you forget to seek a common ground for cooperation between you and someone else.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Optimism and enthusiasm color your day. You're full of big, bright ideas, and you're bursting to share them with others. Go right ahead.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't let a friend talk you into spending too much money on something, unless you truly want to do it. There's a difference between being generous and being extravagant.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Remind yourself to avoid excess today. Don't count your chickens until they're barbecued. It's easy to overestimate things right now.

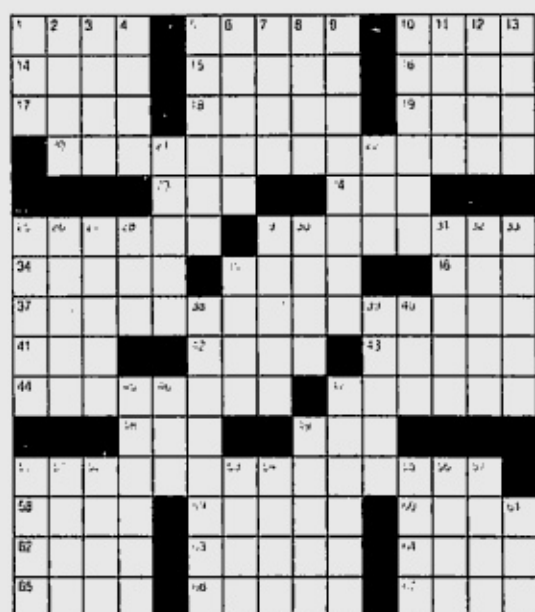
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Grandiose travel plans and ambitious ideas related to publishing or higher education might fly. Then again, they could be unrealistic and just wishful thinking. (Hard to say.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can definitely benefit from someone today, because you stand to reap the rewards that others have earned. Keep your eyes and your pockets open! Do not refuse opportunities and favors that come your way.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're bold enough to attempt tasks you might not normally consider possible. Because of this, you could succeed. If you don't, fear not; one's reach should exceed one's grasp.

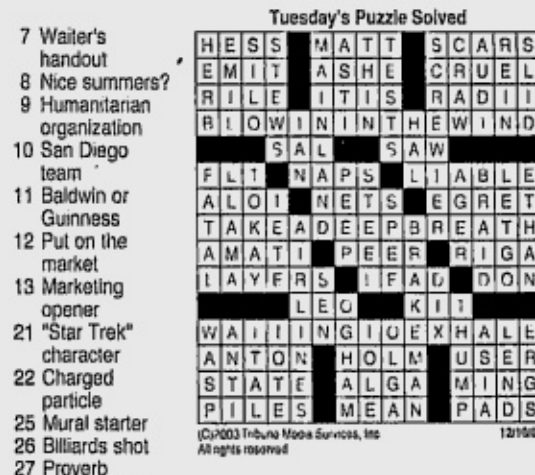
DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Untidy state
 - Enthusiastic player
 - Beyond
 - Part of HOMES
 - Long, narrow ridge
 - On the sheltered side
 - Colorado tributary
 - Locked like a lion
 - Small valley
 - Big Apple roundabout
 - Possesses
 - v. Wade
 - High-flyer of myth
 - Beckers
 - "Unsale at Any Speed" author
 - Word of woe
 - "My Gal ..."
 - London landmark
 - Maris, casually
 - "la Douce"
 - Incited
 - Western Hemisphere
 - Cruise ships
 - Dead-eye
 - Sawback
 - Infamous SE Asian area
 - Liquid weather
 - Footlong containers
 - Wander
 - Lamentar's words
 - Composer Blake
 - Again
 - Litigator
 - Idyllic places
 - Used to be



By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA

12/10/03



By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA

12/10/03

- DOWN**
- Actress Tilly
 - Lindros of the NHL
 - Farm building
 - Close tightly
 - Greek letters
 - Saudis and Omanis
 - Waiter's handout
 - Nice summers?
 - Humanitarian organization
 - San Diego team
 - Baldwin or Guinness
 - Put on the market
 - Marketing opener
 - "Star Trek" character
 - Charged particle
 - Mural starter
 - Billiards shot
 - Proverb
 - Flag thrower
 - Bangs shut
 - Branch of the Amazon
 - Missouri tributary
 - More unusual
 - Winter coasters
 - Taj Mahal site
 - Card holder
 - Aidan or Anthony
 - Coffee server
 - Comic Gilda
 - Arctic surface
 - Rental agreements
 - Advertising connection
 - Mardi
 - Waikiki's island
 - Citrus fruit
 - Muffled sound
 - Spa garment
 - Get taller
 - Tennis zero
 - At all times
 - Afore

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



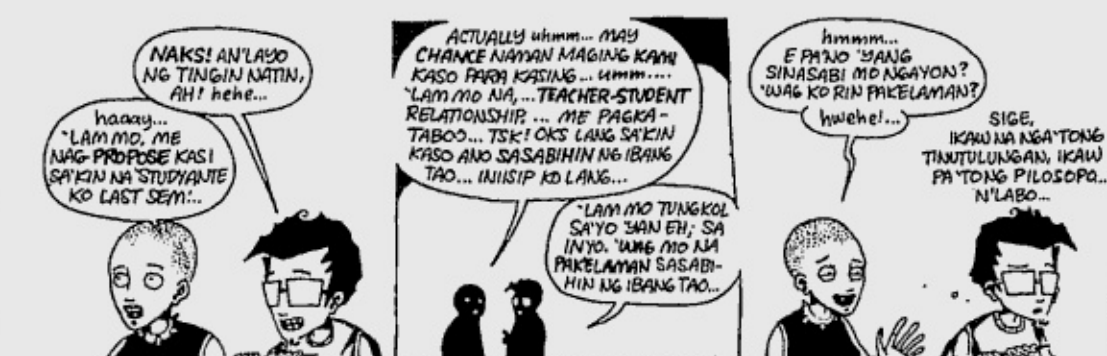
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBING





PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS. FEARLESS VIEWS

Music to our ears

By Maui V. Reyes
 2bU! Correspondent

Last Nov. 29, three wannabe DJs were given the chance to prove their worth to party-goers at the Philips BeDJ MixMaster Finals at Where?.

The prize? A trip to Capetown, South Africa, where they get to compete with other international wannabe-DJs.

The catch? You have to compose a two-minute track on the new Philips BeDJ 530 mobile phone, which features a sound mixer with a nine-track recorder.

From spotting out 30 wannabe disc jockeys around the metro and narrowing it down to three, judges Elen Torres of Philips Consumer Electronics, Big Fish event organizer Domini Primero and Ministry of Sound DJ Mauro Picotto (who flew in just for this event) picked out Ian Magbanua for his soulful ambient track, which stood out from the pack that all sounded like polyphonic ringtones.

While the other contestants have probably worked the turntables, Ian probably doesn't even know how to turn its power switch on.

"I compose music on my computer, but I can't spin turntables," he says, laughing. "If you give me two turntables now, I wouldn't know what to do with them. I make music that I think sounds good, and that's about it."

He's also part of Electronica Manila, a local organization that houses electronica artists. Don't think your usual street party, though. These guys take their music seriously, and you wouldn't find them hosting parties. They've played this year's Fête de la Musique, and enjoyed their very own venue at the festival.

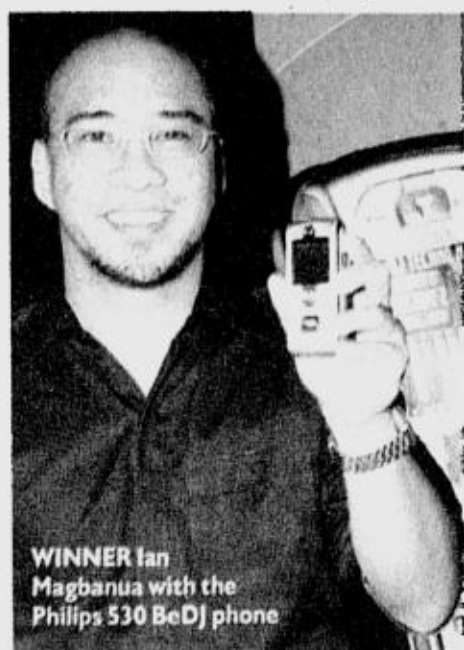
2bU! managed to squeeze a few minutes with the triumphant "phone DJ" to talk about his roots, his music and the kind of crowd that perks him up.

What's the title of the piece that won?

There's no title. I just based it on the original track that I used which was on the phone. If I remember right, it was called, "Flying CC." So I just named it "Ian CC." I didn't think they'd be asking for titles.



CLUB music icon Mauro Picotto of Ministry of Sound graced the Philips BeDJ MixMaster Search



WINNER Ian Magbanua with the Philips 530 BeDJ phone

Ian Magbanua's ambient track composed on the new Philips BeDJ 530 mobile phone wins the Philips BeDJ MixMaster Search

How do you find the phone?

It's an interesting tool. I guess it's targeted toward music lovers and those aspiring to play with tracks, so they can just take out the parts of the song and remake the song the way they want to.

What do you plan to do in Africa?

I'm going to party like hell. It's making me a bit nervous...

You think this will open doors for Electronica Manila?

I think it will. Most of us in Electronica Manila are software tweekers, we're software people—which is basically what the phone has to offer: software to play with.

If you could remix any song for any OPM artist...

I'd pick Cynthia Alexander. She's already done that, she remixed her own songs. I've done a remix for Cambio.

Ever thought of collaborating with Squid 9?

Yes! We've been talking about it, me and Raimund [Marasigan].

Do you see yourselves doing Smart parties now?

No, no, no. I've been hanging out a lot with the indie people, and I like that scene. Especially Twisted Halo. I like that scene, I like that crowd.

How about Fête?

Yeah! Hopefully next year, we'll be bringing in a lot of the newer electronica artists. Because a lot of them are just in hiding. So we're just completing the crew.

The first Filipino-made videogame makes its bid to join Counterstrike and Ragnarok in the gamers' pantheon



Anito in my mind

By Jay Mata
 2bU! Correspondent

IT isn't often that a videogame gets the attention Anito: Defend A Land Enraged is getting.

Let's see: PLDT has lavished a sponsorship, there was a launch party at Dish, and practically every Filipino blue-chip company is lining up to support it.

Why all the hoopla over a silly game? Easy. Anito is the first Filipino-made videogame. Created by Anino Entertainment, it was developed by Filipinos, for Filipinos and with a distinctly Filipino flair to it.

This role-playing game, made in the style of successful franchises like Fallout and Diablo, weaves a tale inspired heavily by Filipino folklore and myths. And like Lapu-Lapu's rout of the foreign horde signaling the birth of a country, Anito begins an entirely new but promising local industry for Pinoy-made videogames.

Pioneer

The launch night naturally began with thank you's and acknowledgments. The whole Anino entertainment crew got on stage to be recognized by a receptive crowd. After pleasantries were dealt with, a backgrounder on the local videogame industry was presented.

As the first of its kind in the Philippines, Anino Entertainment finds itself a pioneer in a potentially big market. Yes, there is a market here, if the runaway success of Counterstrike and the more recent Ragnarok Online is anything to go by.

With Internet cafés sprouting everywhere and stores filled with numerous (though mostly pirated) game CDs, it was only a matter of time before the idea of a local game industry began to take root.

And why not? Korea has already



PLAYTESTING the game

proven it can be done, and Anito is certainly a step in the right direction. The presentation ended with expressions of hope and more support for the fledgling industry, and an announcement of an annual game-development contest starting next year to boost the budding market.

Excited

Then came the costume contest. Supposedly, Anino set a contest for the best tribal costume. Only one soul, however, was brave enough to strut around Dish half-naked with a spear and tattoos. Naturally, he won the prize.

Dish, for its part, was transformed into a mini expo from the swinging bar it usually was. One side had a row of computers showing off the game of the evening to an excited crowd. Another side had a couple of computers showing Anino Entertainment's other products, such as game software for your cell phone.

There was Nucleus, a puzzle-like game, and Tersigao's Wrath, a prequel to Anito itself. Both are available on the Nokia 6600.

A row of Playstation 2s occupied another side, to entertain the crowd with games like Gran Turismo and Soul Calibur 2. (Coincidentally, Soul Calibur 2 features a Filipino fighter by the name of Talim).

A makeshift henna-tattoo parlor was also available for visitors to get the indigenous markings that fit perfectly well with the night's theme.

Level-Up-Games, the people who introduced to us the popular Ragnarok Online, was also there to support fellow game enthusiasts.

Indigenous

In keeping with the theme of Philippine folklore and tribal culture, the organizers got local bands that were known to play contemporary music with ethnic sounds—which is called indigenous rock.

OPM rock mainstays like Indio-I, Pinikpikan and Matilda made their presence known and rocked the night away. The hybrid music was refreshing to hear—certainly way different from "Ocho-Ocho" and all the other crap that currently rule the airwaves.

The game itself is an experience to be cherished. Considering its low system requirements and Anino's limited funding and lack of experience, Anito looked damn good!

Honestly, I wasn't really expecting much when I first heard of this game more than a year ago. Seeing the final result, however, made me believe that we Filipinos might actually have something world-class going on.

My heart leapt when a computer-generated graphic sequence showed an old man look to the horizon and in a low, foreboding voice whisper, "Dumating na sila..." That one line summed up the thrilling, rousing adventure that shortly followed.

Yes, Anito has arrived. Gamers of the Philippines, rejoice!

Anito is available in all software outlets for P750. Visit www.aninoentertainment.com

Sarap Sunkist in Quick Lamig Pack

RFM We Love Kids

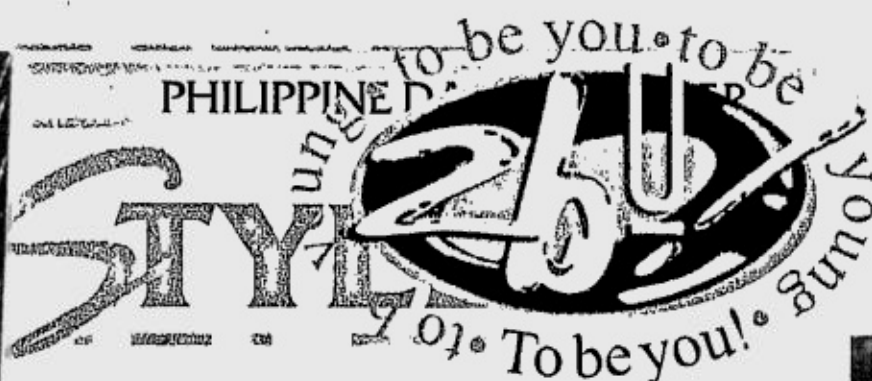
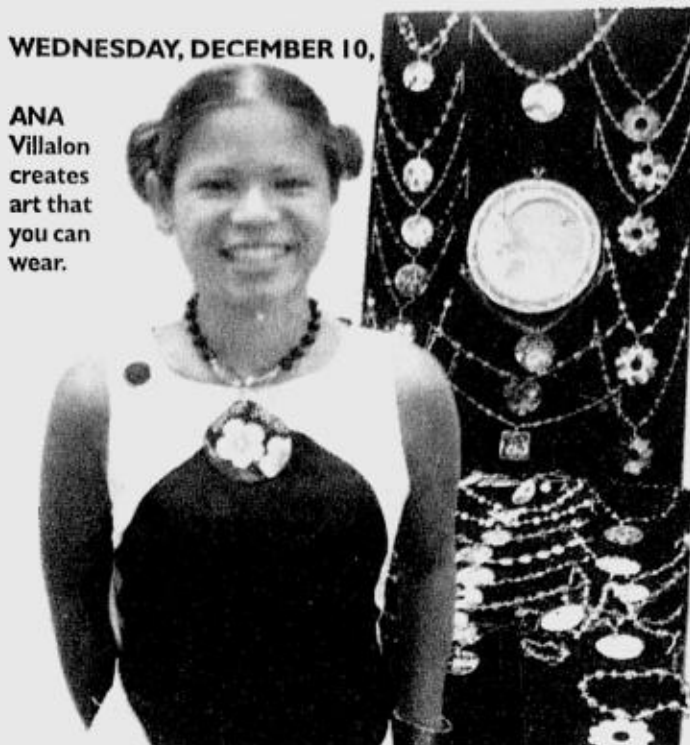
For orders, please call Sunkist Hotline: 636-6986, 631-8101 loc 7590 or loc 7591

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 Dalandan and Mango P6.20

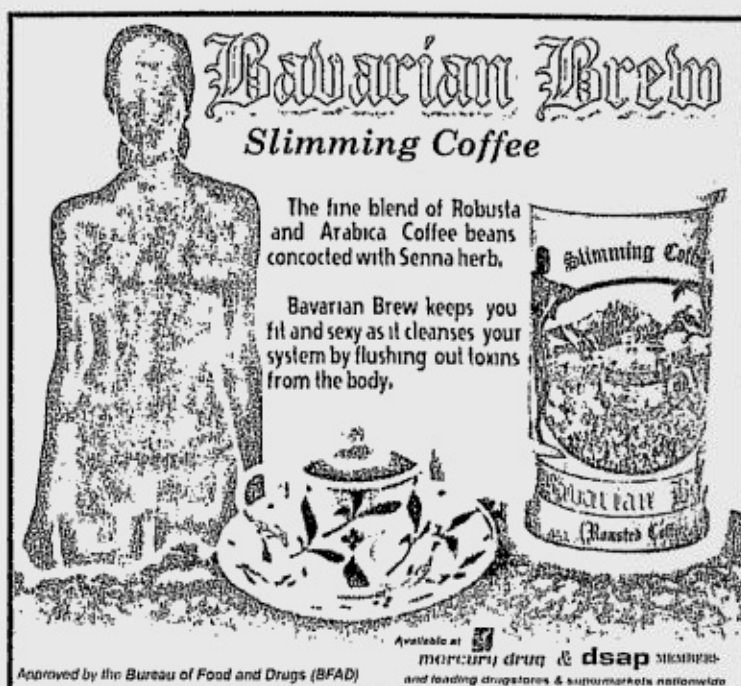
Para sa maramihan at biglaang handa.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10,

ANA Villalon creates art that you can wear.



Give your old necklaces a rest.
It's time to wear art



Her own 'Bohemian Rhapsody'

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

FORGET the ancient locket and the chintzy chokers. How would you like to wear a real piece of art around your neck?

Twenty-seven-year-old Ana Villalon has always been passionate about art.

She has been painting almost her entire life. But a year ago, she got a brilliant idea. "I wanted to do something different. There are already so many painters out there."

She started making hand-painted accessories for herself. Her attractive capiz and mother-of-pearl masterpieces hanging from glass bead necklaces caught the eye of a lot of people.

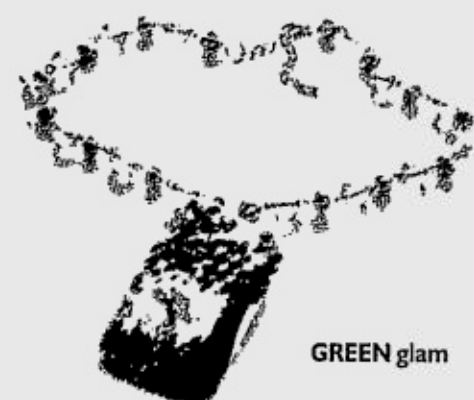
"My friends would say, give me naman, and I would." Soon, it became evident that a lot of people wanted to get their own necklaces. That's when she decided to capitalize on her creations.

Just a year later, bohemiAna, her line of accessories, can already be considered a success. She has participated in a lot of bazaars;

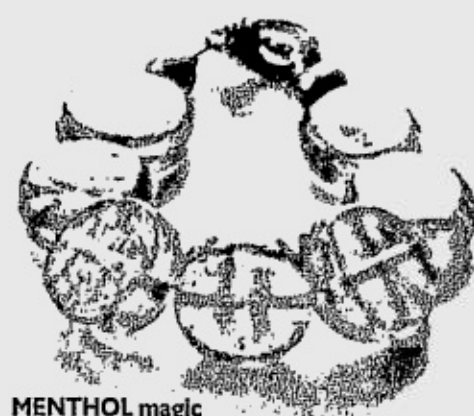
HER/G3



BUTTERFLY beauty



GREEN glam



MENTHOL magic



LACOSTE

on stage 2nyt

Cowboy LAS PIÑAS 801.7644	Cowboy MABINI 525.1474	Cowboy MALATE 521.8143
NOVALICHES 936.9757	BINAN (049) 511.7268	TIA MARIA'S PRP NO ENTRANCE FEE
REMEDIOS 522.0429	6TH GEAR TIA MARIA'S NO ENTRANCE FEE	CROSSTOWN MUSIC ZONE NO ENTRANCE FEE
FOREST TIA MARIA'S NO ENTRANCE FEE	FREE PULUTAN EVERY 2 PITCHES OR 5 BOTTLES OF BEER 400-7435/525-0514	432-3942

• Shangri-La Plaza Mall
Mandaluyong City
Telephone 635-0744

• Glorietta 3
Ayala Center, Makati
Telephone 867-4077

• Robinsons Place Manila
Padre Faura Wing, Level 2
Telephone 522-7778

• The Power Plant Mall
Makati, Ground Floor
Telephone 898-0933

• The Podium
Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
Telephone 633-8226

Santalizing and wearing almost nothing



Text by Tim Yap
Photos by Daniel Tan

FIVE destinations. Countless girls in bikinis. One brand.

From being a vision in Amanda Griffin and Isabel Engwa's head, Tabu swimwear has ended on every girl's must-have lists. You must admit—bikinis have never looked this good.

That's what I said to myself as I watched the girls parade in their two-piece fabrics from heaven in the shiny white space-age-looking runway at the NBC Tent.

Tania Paulsen pulsed with seductive poise and grace while Bianca Araneta strutted like there was no tomorrow.

Maritoni Fernandez brought out a sense of danger as she carried a golden pistol. Nicolette Bell looked every inch a belle as she appeared in different characters throughout the night.

Rachel Soriano's legs ran from here to eternity. Kuku Trinidad sported a perennial pout.

And the Miss Earth winners were definitely

blessed with more than just their concern for the environment. They also made the environment more beautiful just by their presence.

Thai supermodel and Channel V VJ Cindy Burbridge didn't need a beauty title when she walked with a very large and bejewelled crown. Her poise was queenly.

The scene stealers were too many to mention. Even as some girls slipped onstage (the audience in turn was very gracious and would show their support by giving warm applause—hey, we are a nation of Miriam Quiambao supporters!), the show ran smoothly, with countless highlights, till the end.

The yearly Tabu show, now on its third year, has become our local scene's counterpart of the Victoria's Secret show in New York. This year, Tabu launched three image models—supermodel and PMAP president Rissa Samson, Channel V VJ Sarah Tan, and of course, the sweet and sexy Miss Griffin—who wore little black dresses when they did their curtain call.

And the men in the audience couldn't believe it was over.

Tabu has become the local scene's equivalent of the yearly Victoria's Secret show



PRINTS please. A bright future ahead for Tabu



Streetwear recycled, redefined

By Brian Keith Santos
2bU! Correspondent

EVER wondered what happens to your old pair of jeans once you've gotten rid of it? There's a place in Chiuppano, Italy that "recycles" old pairs of jeans, redesigning and reselling them.

Grotto S.p.A. introduces the Gas clothesline, a brand that will make you change the way you think of street fashion. The brand, which was brought to Manila by Black Cat Inc. (the company behind Nike Park), recently launched its flagship store at the second floor of the newly opened Greenbelt 4.

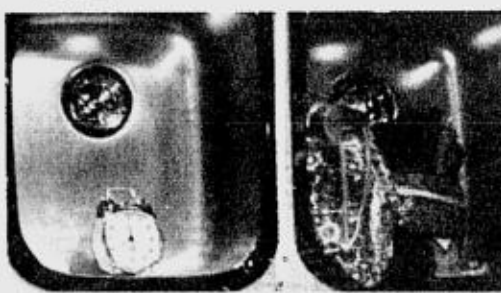
Gas Jeans features a brand that's hip and trendy, inspired by street fashion. Its style is described as romantic, sexy, and never vulgar.

The edge of the brand comes with a deep philosophy of positive thinking, practicality and "non-waste." It carries the tagline "Keep it simple," which says a lot about what the company is all about.

Claudio Grotto, a 55-year-old Italian designer, introduced Gas clothing to the market in



THE GAS woman: romantic, sexy and never vulgar



GAS belts, shoes and accessories are also available.

1986. About 15 in-house staff designers continue to do innovations in the jeanswear industry in their headquarters in Chiuppano.

The Gas Jeans difference lies in its "rethink, recycle" concept. What they do is they buy their old set of jeans, cut all parts, and recycle it. They give each recycling stage a different taste to give the old pair a brand new, stylish look.

Grotto hopes to come out with four collections a year. They just launched their Spring/Autumn collection in time for the grand opening of their first store in the country.



GAS Jeans flagship store at the 2/L, Greenbelt 4

THE 2BU! YEARENDER SURVEY Vote for the best and worst of 2003

AMONG last year's big winners were Mandy Moore, Harry Potter, Incubus, Chiccosci, Norah Jones, John Mayer, Magic 89.9, Greenbelt 3 Cinemas, Jon Hall, Sarah Meier, Bench Fix, McDonald's, KFC Hotshots, BJ Manalo, "Amazing Race" and "CSI."

Who will be the big winners of 2003?

We want you to be the judge again. Tell us who you think deserve to be hailed the Best and Worst of 2003 under the following categories:

Music: band, song, singer, radio station, radio DJ, music video, album packaging, concert

Film: movie, movie theater,

actor, actress

Fashion: male model, female model, fashion designer, brand, shop, trend, accessory, fashion icon

Health and beauty: beauty product, spa, salon, hairstyle, fitness regimen

Literature: book, writer, magazine

Food: restaurant, dish, fast food

Sports: athlete, UAAP team, NCAA team

Television: commercial, TV show, TV actress, TV actor, VJ, music channel

Technology: website, gadget, game

Send your answers to 2bU! Best and Worst of 2003 Poll, PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague St., Makati; or e-mail

test2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Have your answers in by 12

nn on Dec. 27.

limp bizkit goes limp

WE love you, dear readers, and we would do most anything to make you happy. But, just like earthquakes and major zit breakouts, there are just some things beyond our control.

We were as shattered as you to learn that the Limp Bizkit concert in Manila scheduled for Dec. 9 has been cancelled. According to the promoters, the tour dates for South East Asia—including Bangkok and Bali—have all been scrapped.

Thank you to those of you who joined the "Show Your Wild Side" contest.

The two winners—Nathaniel Vizcocho from Kalalake, Olongapo City and Llewelyn Malolos from Sto. Tomas, Batangas—will each get Tribal Gear's limited-edition "Beyond The Four" DVD and LimpBizkit "Results May Vary" CD courtesy of Universal Music.

Please bring your ID and the concert ticket (if already claimed) to Tribal Gear, third level of SM Manila, any day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., starting Dec. 15. Call 5281976 for inquiries.

For refund details, ticketholders may call the Ticketnet office at 9115555.

Are you ready to ride into battle?

"EOWYN, Eowyn!" he cried at last. "Eowyn, how come you here? What madness or devily is this? Death, death, death! Death take us all!"

"Then without taking counsel or waiting for the approach of the men of the City, Eomer spurred headlong back to the front of the great host, and cried aloud for the onset. 'Ride! Ride to ruin, and the world's ending!' —The Battle of Pelennor Fields, from "The Return of the King"

2bU! is challenging Tolkien fans to answer a few questions based on the popular trilogy. At stake is a couple of tickets to the Special Advance Screening of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" on Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. at Robinsons Galleria Cinema 2.

Test your Tolkien mettle with this short quiz to remind you of what's at stake in Middle-earth this year!

This week's Trivia:

1. These are large tasked animals used by



the Haradrim like tanks, which they call Mumukli.

2. He is the last Steward of Gondor and the father of Faramir and Boromir.

3. To whom did the Witch King say "Hinder me? Thou fool, no living man may hinder me!"

Answers and winners will be announced next week. Winners should claim their tickets on or before Dec. 17, at 2bU!, PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER.

Last week's answers are: 1. Elves 2. Lembas 3. Gloom

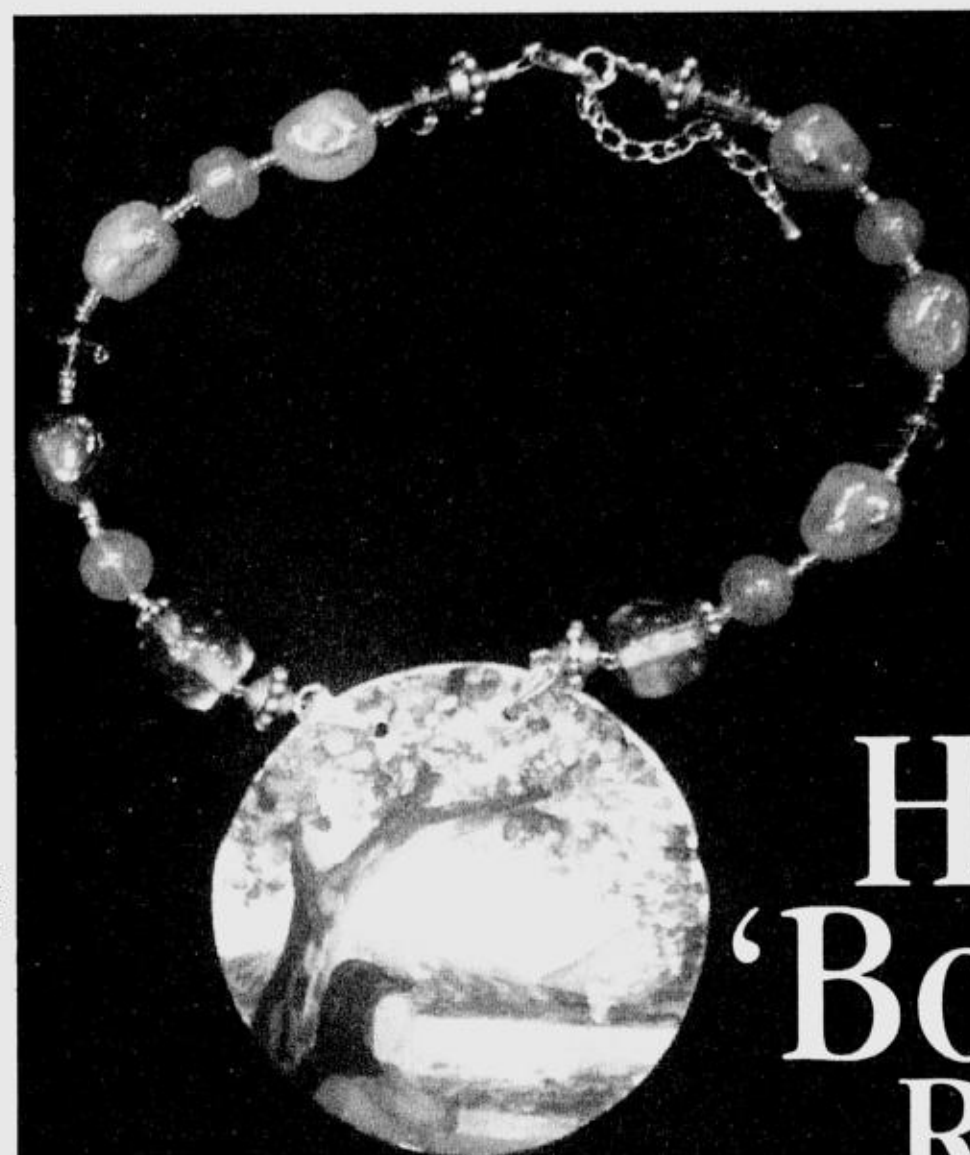
Lawyers.com.ph, New Line Cinema and Pioneer Films in cooperation with the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER and Sinutab (Pfizer) present this special advance screening. Also presented in part by C Interactive Digital Entertainment.

"The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" is the wildly anticipated final installment of the epic three-part film by Peter Jackson and New Line Cinema. This movie is subject to the rating by the MTRCB.

For ticket reservations, e-mail rotk tickets@yahoo.com or contact Vives (09164660062), Romel (09164059469) or Rhoda (09189350460).

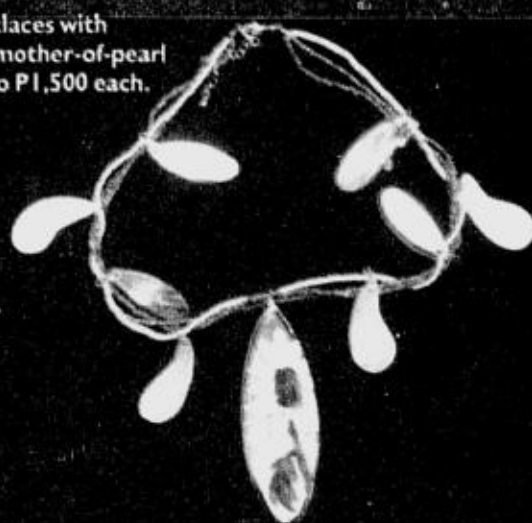
Last week's winner:

April Rowan of Project 6, Quezon City. Winners may claim their prizes from the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER building Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 3 p.m. onwards. Please look for Ruth or Pam.



Her own 'Bohemian Rhapsody'

THESE glass bead necklaces with hand-painted capiz or mother-of-pearl pendants go for P600 to P1,500 each.



From page G1

she supplies different shops like Blush in Glorietta and E-style in Shangri-La Mall and is starting to go into export.

At P300 for the bracelets and P600 to P1,500 for the necklaces, bohemiana accessories aren't a strain on the pocket. Especially when you think of them as works of art.

Ana makes each necklace with her own hands, using glass beads which she orders from all over—Thailand, India and Italy. Each piece is unique, each capiz or mother-of-pearl pendant a canvas for Ana's artistry.

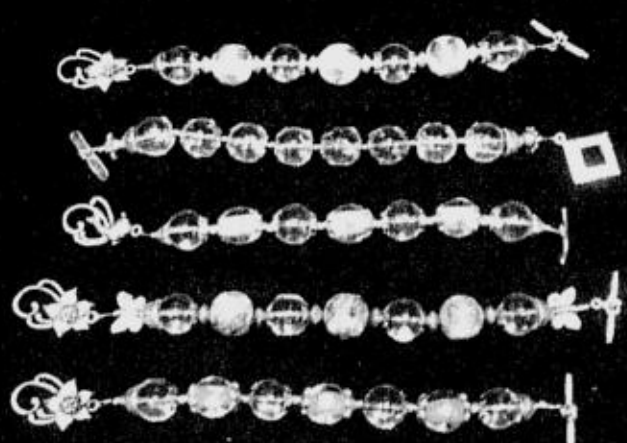
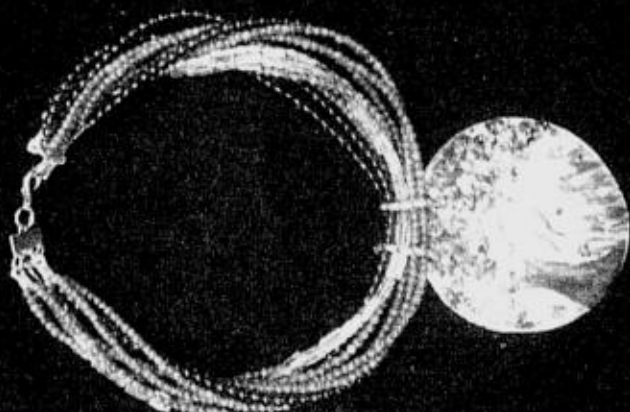
"If I just paint, my works would just be on the walls. Few people would get to appreciate them."

Ana knows she made the right step in not taking the traditional road.

After all, how many artists can claim to have walking galleries all over the country?

For inquiries, call Ana at 0918-9091933.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.



ANA uses glass beads from Thailand, India and Italy.



BRACELETS go for P300 each.

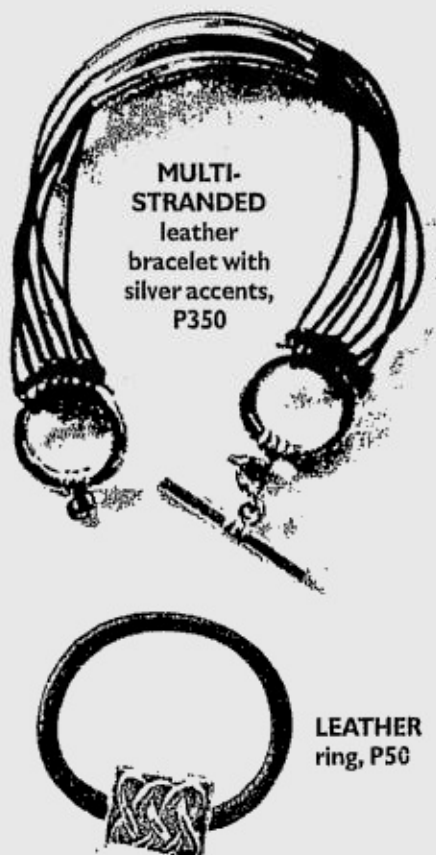
CHARMED

The people behind Luni La Luna have mastered the magic of fusing leather and metal. There are products to cater to different tastes, from dainty little pieces to bigger, more eye-catching ones. Our current favorite is their line of intricate leather charm bracelets. We especially love Myth, the leather bracelet with castle, dragon and wizard charms.

For inquiries, call Baby Lanza at 0917-5380400.



MYTH charm bracelet, P550



MULTI-STRANDED leather bracelet with silver accents, P350



LEATHER ring, P50

FASHION FREAKS

Look what we found!

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

THE FASHION Freaks stormed the Christmas Bazaar at the Grand Ballroom of Hotel InterContinental last Sunday. When our heads had finally stopped reeling from the sensory overload, we methodically moved from booth to booth, searching for items that would catch our eye.

There were so many finds and too little time.

There were winter coats, toe socks in different colors, bags of all kinds, shawls made from rich fabrics and sparkly tops guaranteed to make heads turn.

But for some reason, we were drawn to the endless rows of jewelry.

We left the venue with our wrists and fingers heavier and our pockets lighter.

Check out what we found. You might want them, too.

The next time your mom goes to a bazaar, better tag along. There are tons of goods to discover



ARTEMEX ring, P1050

FLOWER POWER

Here's a classic Fashion Freaks fairy tale. Tiny flowers are especially grown in Mexico, and when ready, are plucked and set on silver, to be transformed into exquisite pieces of jewelry by magic fairies from a company called Artemex. The fairy tale gets even better. These accessories are now available locally.

And when this little beauty stared up at us from one of the booths at the bazaar, our defenses were shattered. We had to have it. Who could say no? After all, it's like having a garden on your own finger.

Visit CMM Home & Lifestyle Gallery at #54 Libertad cor. Kanlaon Streets, Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City. Artemex will soon open a store at The Shops in Greenhills. For inquiries, call Cinderella Tan at 0917-5362806.

TRICK O' TRINKETS

One booth was lined with trinkets and baubles of different kinds. The accessories are cute, funky and surprisingly affordable.

For inquiries, call Kristine Cereso at 0917-8386490.



COLORFUL plastic rings, 3 for P100



THUMB rings in different colors, P50 each



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